

UNIT HERITAGE: LOST AND FOUND

A thesis presented to the Faculty of the U.S. Army  
Command and General Staff College in partial  
fulfillment of the requirements for the  
degree

MASTER OF MILITARY ART AND SCIENCE

by

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B.S., University of Kansas, Lawrence, Kansas, 1979

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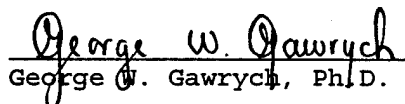
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## ABSTRACT

UNIT HERITAGE: LOST AND FOUND by MAJ David B. Snodgrass, USA, 225 pages.

This study investigates the effectiveness of the Army system for preserving unit heritage. Heritage is valuable to units and the Army, and given the cyclical nature of the size and organizational structure, the Army requires an effective preservation system.

The thesis defines unit heritage and establishes heritage value to units and the Army. System institutions, organizations, and agencies are identified, along with their historical development, roles, and relationships. Collected Army regulations, 1939-1993, are reviewed and their development and evolution portray shifting requirements and responsibilities over the period. A battalion case study, whose existence coincides with the study period, is used to assess system effectiveness by outlining the heritage provided the reactivating battalion, heritage the system possessed but did not voluntarily forward, and heritage reconstructed from sources outside the system.

The case study shows the Army failed to preserve unit heritage and the existing system is inadequate. The system focuses on unit history that is generally well preserved. Omissions and inconsistencies result in sporadically and inefficiently preserved unit property, and customs and traditions are totally neglected and preserved only by accident. The thesis recommends several actions to strengthen the system and improve the overall effectiveness of unit heritage preservation.

## PREFACE

This thesis originated in the fall of 1992, when I received the mission to "stand up" the 70th Engineer Battalion at Fort Riley, Kansas. The Battalion was scheduled to return to active duty as part of the Engineer Brigade of the 1st Infantry Division (Mechanized) and join the 1st Engineer Battalion in providing organic engineer support to the Division. The 1st Engineer Battalion is just that, the U.S. Army's first engineer battalion. It is the oldest and most decorated engineer battalion in the Army, with a tremendous heritage and history, traceable to 1845 and the original company of Miners, Sappers, and Pontoniers. The Battalion has been assigned to the Division ever since the 1st Infantry was formed during World War I.

As part of 1st Engineers, I was well aware of this heritage and the tremendous pride that accompanied it. I had strong concerns that, unless the 70th Engineers had some significant heritage of its own, the new battalion could suffer real morale problems. Having to stand next to the oldest and most decorated engineer battalion in the Army, the new unit needed its own sense of identity and cohesiveness. It needed something to rally around, especially as it was first getting started. If we could find and use the heritage the unit had developed during its previous periods of active service, we would have something with which to start.

I approached the U.S. Army Center for Military History (CMH) and quickly discovered that the heritage of the unit was not readily available. CMH provided a copy of the official Lineage and Honors statement that listed: unit lineage; dates and locations of activations, inactivations, and redesignations; campaign participation credit; and unit awards the Battalion had earned. However, there were no unit colors, guidons, or property of any kind stored in anticipation of the reactivation. There was no record of commanders nor any customs or traditions the Battalion had developed. There was amazingly little heritage available for a unit that last inactivated in 1969, a short 23 years before. While CMH indicated that bits and pieces of heritage might be found inside and outside of the Army system if one cared to look, there was no comprehensive "package" available for issue. I would have to reassemble any heritage the reactivated 70th Battalion would have.

The irony of reactivating a unit and trying to piece together its heritage at the same time the Army was actively drawing down and inactivating units did not escape me. Two battalions that I have served with inactivated during this draw-down. I have many fond memories of my time in those units and am proud to have served in them. My efforts were a part of the units' accomplishments during my tour and my presence contributed to the customs and traditions that gave the units their own special and distinct sense of personality. In a sense, I left a little bit of myself behind in the heritage of those battalions. It pains me to think that none of this may have been preserved when they inactivated. It disappoints me to think that if the battalions ever

reactivate, the new members of those units will not have this heritage to build on and use. I am sorry they will not be able to share a lot of what I still carry with me; the values of the battalions, their sense of duty and mission, their camaraderie and their esprit. Knowing how valuable these would have been during the reactivation of the 70th Engineers, I have to wonder if some future officer tasked with reactivating these battalions, the 3rd Armored Division, the 8th Infantry Division, or any of the other numerous units so recently inactivated, will enjoy any more success than I did. That future officer can have the unit heritage handed to him as he begins the reactivation process, he can try to reconstruct it as I had to do with the 70th Engineer Battalion, or the unit, lacking the resources or initiative, can simply do without. To make the job of that future officer easier, and ensure the unit he stands up has a richer heritage, this study identifies the shortcomings in the Army system charged with preserving unit heritage and recommends the changes necessary to enhance their preservation.

I would like to thank all of those who helped make this thesis possible, to include the staffs of the Organizational History and Museum Divisions of the U.S. Army Center for Military History in Washington, D.C.; the U.S. Army Institute of Heraldry in Washington, D.C.; the U.S. Army Military History Institute at Carlisle Barracks; and the Combined Arms Research Library at Fort Leavenworth. Additionally, I would like to thank Mr. Terry Van Meter, director of the Cavalry and 1st Infantry Division Museums at Fort Riley; the former members of the 70th Engineer Battalion who helped fill in the blanks; the numerous veterans

organizations who assisted my search for former members; my office mates in the Leader Development Office who supported my efforts; and most importantly, my thesis committee for their guidance, critique and criticisms. Last, but not least, thanks go to my parents, my wife, and my sons for their support, understanding, sacrifice, and tolerance.

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#### LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AAR	After Action Report
AD	Armored Division
ALCAN	Alaska-Canada Highway
AR	Army Regulation
ARNG	Army National Guard
ARVN	Army of the Republic of Vietnam
BLDG	Building
BN	Battalion
BG	Brigadier General
CARL	Combined Arms Research Library, Fort Leavenworth, KS
CG	Commanding General
CMD	Command
CMH	U.S. Army Center for Military History
COL	Colonel
CONUS	Continental United States
CPT	Captain
EN	Engineer
ERI	Engineer Restructure Initiative
ID	Infantry Division
IRR	Individual Ready Reserve
IMH	U.S. Army Institute of Military History
LT	Lieutenant

LTC	Lieutenant Colonel
LTG	Lieutenant General
MAJ	Major
MHI	Military History Institute, Carlisle Barracks, PA
NA	National Archives and Records Administration
NTC	National Training Center, Fort Irwin, CA
NVA	North Vietnamese Army
PFC	Private First Class
RA	Regular Army
SR	Special Regulation
TOE	Table of Organization and Equipment
USAR	U.S. Army Reserve

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### UNIT HERITAGE: DEFINITION AND VALUE

The research questions for this thesis are "How well does the Army system preserve a unit's heritage and identity during periods of inactivation, and how is a unit's heritage and identity reconstructed upon reactivation if it has not been well preserved?" The first chapter will define unit heritage, demonstrate why heritage is important to individuals in the unit, the unit itself, and the Army, and show that heritage has been, is now, and will continue to have value in the future. Additionally, this chapter will establish the value of the thesis and define its limitations. The next chapter will identify and review the development of the organizations that make up the system charged with preserving the heritage of Army units and the development of the applicable Army regulations. Using a case study of the 70th Engineer Battalion, the next three chapters will assess the effectiveness of the system by outlining the heritage the system provided the reactivating battalion, heritage pieces the system possessed, but did not provide the battalion until searched out and requested, and the heritage that was reconstructed from sources outside the system. Finally, conclusions and recommendations will be presented.

While the Army focuses on unit history, unit heritage, for the purpose of this thesis, consists of much more than a simple historical

record of dates and places. Unit heritage consists of three components: unit history, unit property, and unit customs and traditions. The system addresses the first in detail and generally preserves unit history well. System omissions and inconsistencies result in sporadically and inefficiently preserved unit property, and unfortunately, customs and traditions that add the most human dimension to the heritage are totally neglected and preserved only by accident.

Unit history is simply the record of unit significant events that addresses the who, what, when, where, why, and how of a unit and forms the foundation of a unit heritage. The official Lineage and Honors statement<sup>1</sup> encapsulates unit history and lists unit lineage, dates and locations of unit status changes,<sup>2</sup> campaign participation credit, and unit awards earned. These alone can be a source of pride for a unit like the 1st Engineer Battalion, the oldest and most decorated engineer battalion in the Army, with a rich heritage and history traceable to 1845 and the original company of Miners, Sappers, and Pontoniers.<sup>3</sup>

While a Lineage and Honors statement provides cursory information on the who, when, and where, it is really just enough to form the official skeleton of a unit history. Additional information, such as the names and service dates of unit commanders, locations at which the unit has served, missions the unit has been charged with, its organizational structure, and dates of events the unit has participated in, add meat to the bones of the history and make it an invaluable addition to a unit heritage. Simply knowing that Robert E. Lee, George McClellan, and P. G. T. Beauregard served as lieutenants in Company A,

1st Engineers, or that two soldiers of the battalion received the Medal of Honor provides an additional, intangible source of pride.<sup>4</sup> In some cases, a former commander has left his particular personality or characteristics imbedded in the unit character. Major General (Retired) Ernest N. Harmon, talking about another former commander of the 2nd Armored Division, gave George Patton the credit for "giving the division dash, coupled with an aggressive attitude and the ultimate in fighting spirit - qualities never lost by its soldiers."<sup>5</sup> Knowing when and where a unit was located, what its mission was, what organizations it supported, and the role it played in significant events can also enhance the history and heritage of a unit and may leave a permanent mark. The 3rd Infantry Division will forever be known as "the Marne Division" and the "Rock of the Marne . . . because of its impregnable stand against the Germans' last great counteroffensive"<sup>6</sup> in World War I. The 3rd Armored Cavalry carries its nickname of "Brave Rifles" on its distinctive unit insignia (unit crest). The nickname and the unit motto originated during the Mexican War upon the capture of Mexico City. "Upon entering the city, it hoisted the Stars and Stripes over the national palace and displayed the regimental standard from the palace balcony, which drew from General Scott the statement, 'Brave Rifles! Veterans! You have been baptized in fire and blood and have come out steel.'"<sup>7</sup> The 7th Cavalry, permanently linked with Custer and the Little Big Horn, is just as linked with Fort Riley and Kansas because of the amount of time it garrisoned there.<sup>8</sup> The 1st Infantry Division is also bonded to Fort Riley, having spent the majority of its stateside service there.<sup>9</sup> Ultimately, all of the additional who, what, when,

where, why, and how, meat of a unit fleshes out the skeletal Lineage and Honors Statement to form a solid body of unit history. Of the three components of unit heritage, this information is the most plentiful and is the easiest to capture, track, reconstruct, store and maintain.

The second component of unit heritage is the unit property, that is, all of the paraphernalia that the unit has accumulated during its existence on active duty. Accumulation of this property begins with the unit activation and is not only physical evidence of unit existence and activities, it also sparks recollections of those activities and what they represent to the unit. Army units require equipment and property to perform their day to day missions. Organizational colors<sup>10</sup> are one of the first things a unit obtains and is easily the most recognizable piece of unit property, arguably the physical property center of gravity of a unit.<sup>11</sup> They, along with the unit crest and distinctive shoulder insignia (unit patch), are the most visible symbol of a unit and the most treasured.<sup>12</sup> Obsolete organizational property, equipment authorized by the Table of Organization and Equipment (TOE) for a unit to perform its mission, may hold no special significance for the unit at the time the old equipment was authorized, yet may stir emotion as time passes and equipment changes. A musket from the Revolutionary or Civil War may be of special significance to a modern day infantry unit, for example. There are few armor battalion headquarters that one can drive past without seeing an out of service tank gracing the front lawn. The 2nd Armored Division assembled and maintains a collection of World War II vintage vehicles that represented each of the major subordinate commands and incorporates them into their

official ceremonies and parades. The 1st Infantry Division color guard wears the field uniforms of all of the major wars the Division has participated in: World Wars I and II, Vietnam, and the Gulf War.

In addition to authorized Army property, a unit and its individual members acquire and amass additional property over time. Units receive Army unit citations, streamers, and certificates to recognize superior performance. They receive campaign streamers, recognizing participation in specific campaigns, that are added to the unit colors, the more streamers, the greater the heritage represented. These streamers can, like individual awards, have a profound effect on the esprit and psyche of units.<sup>13</sup> Unit awards come from other sources besides the Army and the U.S. Government. Other governments present their own national awards, such as the multiple French Croix de Guerre, Belgian Fourragere, and Republic of Vietnam Citations awarded the 1st Infantry Division for actions in World War I, World War II, and Vietnam.<sup>14</sup> They come from private organizations, such as the Society of American Military Engineers, who present the Itschner Award annually to the "best active duty, reserve and national guard engineer company in the Army."<sup>15</sup> Whatever the source, these awards physically represent some feat, accomplishment or service. Less significant awards, such as athletic trophies, reenlistment awards, blood donor support, accident free safety awards and others, also represent accomplishments or service, but may, or may not, have more than a transitory value. They are important to the soldiers in a unit at the time, but their value dwindles as those soldiers depart and new soldiers arrive unfamiliar with the events. The long-term value of these awards is to establish



and document trends in service and achievement. One cannot help notice and be impressed with the large assortment of Division and installation championship trophies, stretching back to the 1920s, that lend support to the 1st Engineer Battalion aura of success and mission accomplishment.

Photographs, unit newspapers and newsletters, and official documents also serve as physical links to past accomplishments. The 1st Engineer Battalion maintains a "Leaders Library" in its headquarters that serves as the historical archive of the battalion. In the library are photographic "scrapbooks" dating back to World War I that quickly provide visitors with a sense of tradition and history. Thumbing through Vietnam era Standing Operations Procedures and World War II Operations Reports link the challenges and skills of today's soldier with his predecessor of twenty to fifty years ago. Gifts to the battalion, such as the silver punch bowl presented to the Officers Mess by former commander, Ulysses S. Grant III (June 1934 to August 1936), attest to the allegiance and camaraderie of its members. War souvenirs, such as the captured Iraqi flag, autographed by General Norman Schwarzkopf, clearly demonstrate where the battalion has been, what it has endured, and what it has accomplished. The carved wooden Corps of Engineer Castle has been with the battalion since 1976 and occupies a special place in the activities of the battalion. The Russian ammunition case the Castle is transported in, was collected from a Soviet Army refuse pile in a training area on the outskirts of Jena, in the former East Germany, days after the departure of the Soviet garrison. Battalion officers, conducting a staff ride of the 1806

battle of Jena/Auerstadt after the REFORGER 92 exercises, came across the training area and consciously added another bit of unit property and another piece to the heritage of the battalion.

Sometimes, unit property can achieve a prominence in a unit that practically overshadows everything else and captures the heart and spirit of the unit. In 1956, Private First Class Floyd T. Dewitt of the 17th Engineer Battalion, created a life size statue of a young engineer wielding a 12-pound sledgehammer. The battalion placed the statue in front of the headquarters in Germany and informally christened it "John Henry."<sup>16</sup> The statue became such a part of the battalion, that the unit has assumed the "John Henry Battalion" as its nickname, eventually petitioning the CMH for official recognition.<sup>17</sup> Of the three components of unit heritage, unit property is the easiest to identify because it is the only one that physically exists. It consists of touchable three dimensional objects, such as statues, weapons, even documents, that have a historical significance to a unit. It is also the only component with direct potential monetary value, requiring varying degrees of security and physical space for display and storage, and is the most difficult to reconstruct or reproduce due to each objects specific link with the past of a unit.

The final component, unit traditions, customs, and practices, is also the most nebulous and fleeting component of unit heritage. Like unit property, unit traditions, customs, and practices begin with the units' activation and, if sustained and practiced, can also spark recollections of those activities and what they represent to the unit. These traditions, customs, and practices take numerous forms. There are

units like the 1st Infantry Division that have their own song.<sup>18</sup> Units like the 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment not only have a "Regimental Toast" for formal social events, but also have a specified "Regimental Grace" and a designated "Regimental Prayer."<sup>19</sup> The 2nd Armored Division has its own "special recipe" for the "2nd Armored Division Diesel Punch" used in formal social events.<sup>20</sup> Code names that were originally assigned "for simplicity of designation in communications"<sup>21</sup> have now become permanently associated with units. The 1st Infantry Division, long ago designated "Danger," used the code word throughout World War II and even now uses it to designate their Division command and control centers and as fixed radio call signs for key Division personnel. Unit mottoes and nicknames come into being and become incorporated into the fabric of the unit. It is easy to see how the 1st Infantry Division picked up the nickname of "the Big Red One," but where did 2nd Armored Division get "Hell on Wheels?"<sup>22</sup>

It is tradition that dictates soldiers of the 2nd Armored Division wear their shoulder sleeve insignia over the top left pocket of their field uniform. Officially, it originated from the General Order signed by then-commanding Brigadier General George Patton.<sup>23</sup> However, there are at least three accounts of what generated the order: first, that his wife liked the looks of it there; second, that he wanted the Division to always be close to the hearts of its members; and, finally, that he wanted the enemy to know who was coming to kill them.

Famous stories and anecdotes of the unit enhance the culture, customs, and legends of the unit. One of the most famous examples is Major General Anthony McAuliffe's answer to the German surrender

ultimatum, as he and his 101st Airborne Division were surrounded at Bastogne during the "Battle of the Bulge" in 1944. "Nuts!" will forever carry a special meaning to a 101st soldier.<sup>24</sup>

Frivolity and humor can enrich unit traditions, customs and practices as well as reality. Most units have developed some time honored duty obligations for which the junior lieutenant of the unit is responsible. These duties are most apparent during social gatherings of officers and can encompass a wide range of serious and light-hearted responsibilities. Ensuring a table is secured for the unit command group at the Officers Club on a Friday afternoon, tasting food and beverages to ensure their fitness of consumption, presenting one of the obligatory toasts during a dinner, and the feeding and care of the unit mascot are just a few of the duties a junior lieutenant can be charged with. The 559th Engineer Battalion, stationed in Hanau, Germany, until its inactivation, maintained a German beerstein for each officer in the battalion and an official Battalion Mug Standard Operating Procedure (SOP). The junior lieutenant was first charged to develop a new annex to the SOP, whose stated purpose was to provide "guidance on mug usage procedures within this command. Additional objectives are to increase the degree of familiarization with the history, customs, traditions, peculiarities and distinguished background of the mugs of the 559th Engineer Battalion."<sup>25</sup> Once the officers of the battalion accepted and incorporated an annex into the Mug SOP, responsibility for the security, cleaning and transportation of the mugs, to and from all battalion functions designated by the Battalion Commander, transferred to the next junior lieutenant who arrived.

Almost all units present some type of award to the officer or noncommissioned officer who demonstrates the greatest ability to "under achieve," or "screw up," during a specified period of time. The 559th Engineers had the "Fickle Finger of Fate Award," the 17th Engineers have the "Golden Picket Award," and the Operations Group of the National Training Center has the "Attack Helicopters Seldom Hit Itty-bitty Targets Award," often referred to by its acronym. Nominations and presentations for these awards are usually made during unit social events and require the nomination to have at least some basis in fact. Artistic enhancement is commonly encouraged.

Incoming personnel are almost always handed unit traditions, customs, and ceremonies through word of mouth or action. Rarely, if ever, are they recorded and preserved. This potentially results in an unintentional alteration or modification through time, lapse into disuse, or complete loss. As a result, these traditions, customs, and practices are the most difficult to maintain, and unless an experienced former member is assessable, practically impossible to reconstruct.

Separately, the history, property, and customs and traditions components of unit heritage are valuable, but when combined they are irreplaceable. A tradition can build around a historical event that incorporates a piece of unit property, such as a unit punch ceremony that uses a bottle of French red wine to represent 1st Engineer Battalion's actions on Normandy Beach on D-Day, mixed in the silver battalion punch bowl presented by a former commander. A commander who does or says the right thing, at the right time, in the right place, can weave his words into the history of the event and the traditions of a

unit, as did Major General McAuliffe. A piece of property itself can become a unit tradition and integrate itself into the history of a unit, such as the 17th Engineer's "John Henry." Together, these three components form the heritage of a unit and establish the institutional basis for strong unit morale. However, because of the instability of the pieces of heritage and the lack of recorded and documentary evidence, much of this heritage becomes transitory. Unless captured and preserved, its precious existence and value to the unit are tenuous.

Having defined unit heritage and presented how heritage is of value to the members of the unit and the unit itself, one must look now at history and the dynamics of the U.S. Army to establish its importance. The Army has never been, nor will it ever be a static organization. The authorized end strength, composition, structure, equipment, doctrine, missions, and threat constantly interact, resulting in the growth or reduction of the force in general, and the activations and inactivations of units in particular. Even now the Army is in the midst of a drawdown that has resulted in the inactivation of a large number of units. If unit heritage is important enough to brief incoming soldiers on, if it is important enough to invoke during unit ceremonies and activities, if it is important enough to display on unit colors, unit walls, and on unit soldiers, then it is important enough to preserve and ensure it is properly passed on to new generations of soldiers and new incarnations of units.<sup>26</sup> Hanson Baldwin captured the essence of this argument in his introduction to Danger Forward: The Story of the First Division in World War II:

The First Division has no monopoly on courage . . . . But it has the magic of its name - The Red One; the Fighting First. It

wears the armor of history and carries the shield of tradition. It is a symbol - of legitimate pride in past achievements . . . there was . . . one quality above all others which distinguished this division and set it apart beyond all others. It was - and is - a consciousness of tradition. To those who have never soldiered this may seem a trivial characteristic but it is the backbone of military morale. A unit has esprit when it believes it is the "best damned squad in the best damned platoon in the best damned company in the best damned battalion in the best damned regiment in the best damned division in the whole goddam army." And it gets this esprit from leadership and from a sense of obligation to history.

The First Division has this quality highly. Like the cadet at West Point, with the "long gray line" of those who have gone before beside him, the First does not march alone. Its battle rings and streamers attest its past; its ghostly veterans of St. Mihiel, of the Meuse-Argonne, of El Guetter, of Sicily and Normandy, of Belgium and the Rhine tramp beside the living. Nor is their presence an insensate thing. Almost, the First Division has become - apart and aside from the men who make it - a living entity, a distinct personality with a past, a present and a future. For its officers have taken care to see that this is so, to preserve and strengthen this sense of tradition, to impress upon its new recruits a pride of unit and an understanding - which once absorbed can never be forgotten - of the duties of the living to the dead. To some, this may seem a heavy burden - this sense of obligation to history, this maintenance of the high standards of a brave past - but to the soldier it can be a steadying influence in time of trouble.

The First has been blessed through most of its career by leaders who understood the importance of tradition and the twin obligations each good soldier owes - to his unit, past and present, and to his "buddies." Terry Allen and Huebner understood it - and their predecessors in the days between the two wars when it was harder to keep alive a sense of history and to pass on the torch of the past to the future. The First's officers still understand it; in a sense this book represents part of this understanding, by preserving for the future the deeds of the past.<sup>27</sup>

Other units have slightly different words to explain the same deep feelings. The former chief of staff, Christian A. Bach, wrote of the 4th Infantry Division in 1920:

What soul is to the individual, spirit is to the Division. Born of the ideals of the Regular Army . . . this spirit strengthened men when their muscles ached during the long marches as they staggered through mud and darkness under heavy loads; steelled

them in the great test of battle when they lay, wet and hungry, under shell-fire which racked their nerves and tore their bodies, and, when death stalked on all sides, carried them forward without thought of themselves, or the heed of danger.<sup>28</sup>

Finally, none other than world renowned psychologist Karl Menninger has attested to the value of unit heritage and spirit. While studying psychological casualties in World War II, he looked at two American divisions fighting side by side against the Germans in North Africa, "one regular army division with a long historical tradition and the other a newly formed reserve division" whose first chapters of heritage were just being written. He found the reserve division "was almost incapacitated" after the campaign, while the regular division showed few cases of "battle fatigue." His results, published in a study entitled "All But Me and Thee," concluded "the only variable was unit pride and tradition."<sup>29</sup>

Given the value and importance of unit heritage, the value of this thesis is threefold. First, it provides an assessment of Army capabilities to maintain and pass on the heritage of units to new generations of soldiers. It identifies shortfalls in policy, system procedures, and execution that can lead to a formalized system that would provide a reactivating unit a "heritage package." The second benefit is to capture and document a sample process for reconstructing a heritage for future reactivating units that have no such package available. The final benefit is to provide the soldiers of the 70th Engineer Battalion a more detailed, comprehensive unit heritage and identity.



The time scope of this thesis is limited to the period from 1941 to 1993, capturing the period when the number of active units in the Army was at an all time high, the subsequent decreases and increases in Army strength based on world events, and the current round of inactivations and "downsizing." Research is focused on Army level programs and policies, assessing their effectiveness, and ultimately the effectiveness of the various subordinate regulations, procedures, and policies through the use of a case study. The 70th Engineer Battalion, and the units that preceded it, is the vehicle used to assess effectiveness and exemplify how a unit heritage can be reconstructed if lost.

The type units this thesis pertains to are primarily separate companies, battalions, separate brigades, and divisions. Regular companies are generally too small and numerous for the Army to historically support, have too few resources to commit to preservation efforts, and are usually too busy to maintain a heritage program. Divisional brigades are excluded since, by doctrine and practice, their subordinate units are task organized and changed based on requirements. Corps units and higher have a history, but are generally so large that any heritage, or benefit of a heritage program is diluted except, for those serving on the immediate staff and headquarters.

Having defined heritage, established the value of heritage to the Army, and defined the focus, value, and limitations of this thesis, the next chapter will identify and review the development of the organizations that make up the system charged with preserving the heritage of Army units, identify and review the development of the

applicable Army regulations, and finally, review the publications found during a literature search of similar topics.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Department of the Army, AR 870-5, Military History: Responsibilities, Policies, and Procedures (Washington: Government Printing Office, 12 July 1993), 7.

The lineage of an organization establishes the continuity of the unit despite various changes in designation or status, thereby, certifying its entitlement to honors, as well as heraldic items, organizational historical property, organizational history files, and other tangible assets. Each statement must be supported by substantial proof, normally documentary in nature. Arbitrary establishment of historical continuity between old and new units will be avoided.

<sup>2</sup> Unit status changes refer to changes the Army directs in the organizational structure, name, or whether the unit actually exists with people and equipment or exists on paper. Officially, status is defined in terms of as constituted, activated, inactivated, redesignated, and disbanded. See glossary for definitions.

<sup>3</sup> Headquarters, 1st Engineer Battalion, The Diehard Standard (Fort Riley: n.p., n.d.), 8.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Donald E. Houston, Hell on Wheels: The 2d Armored Division (San Rafael: Presidio Press, 1977), xiii.

<sup>6</sup> Chief Warrant Officer E.J. Kahn, Jr., and Technical Sergeant Henry McLemore, Fighting Divisions: Histories of Each U.S. Army Combat Division in World War II (1945; reprint, Washington: Zenger Publishing Co., Inc., 1980), 5.

<sup>7</sup> Mary Lee Stubbs and Stanley Russell Conner, Armor-Cavalry Part I: Regular Army and Army Reserve (Washington: Office of the Chief of Military History, United States Army, 1969), 119.

<sup>8</sup> "Fort Riley played an important role in the Indian Wars of the 1860s and 1870s, and was designated a Cavalry Headquarters in 1885. It was here that the famous 7th Cavalry was organized in the summer of 1866 under the command of Colonel Andrew J. Smith and Lieutenant Colonel George Custer. From its origins at Fort Riley, the Seventh Cavalry rode to such well-known campaigns as the Washita River, the Little Big Horn and Wounded Knee." Headquarters, 1st Engineer Battalion, The Diehard Standard, 8.

<sup>9</sup> Headquarters, 1st Engineer Battalion, The Diehard Standard, 8.

<sup>10</sup> See Glossary.

<sup>11</sup> Sir John Fortescue, in the Battle of Albuera, 1811, quoted in Richardson, Fighting Spirit, 1978, as quoted in Peter G. Tsouras, Warrior's Words: A Quotation Book London: Cassell Arms and Armour, 1992), 83.

And hence it was that when one man in every two, or even two in every three, had fallen in Hoghton's Brigade the survivors were still in line by their colours, closing in towards the tattered silk which represented the ark of their covenant - the one thing supremely important in the World.

<sup>12</sup> "The soldiers should make it an article of faith never to abandon their standard. It should be sacred to them; it should be respected; and every type of ceremony should be used to make it respected and precious." Field Marshal Maurice Comte de Saxe, My Reveries, 1732, as quoted in Peter G. Tsouras, Warrior's Words, 82.

<sup>13</sup> General George S. Patton, quoted in Semmes, Portrait of Patton, 1955, as quoted in Peter G. Tsouras, Warrior's Words, 125.

The result of decorations works two ways. It makes the men who get them proud and determined to get more, and it makes the men who have not received them jealous and determined to get some in order to even up. It is the greatest thing we have for building a fighting heart.

<sup>14</sup> John B. Wilson, Armies, Corps, Divisions, and Separate Brigades (Washington: Office of the Chief of Military History, United States Army, 1987), 140.

<sup>15</sup> "Engineer Winners! Military and Civilian Engineers Recognized for Excellence," The Corps Heritage, June-July 1993, 4.

<sup>16</sup> Headquarters, 17th Engineer Battalion, 17th Engineer Battalion Change of Command Program (Fort Hood: n.p., 14 June 1984).

<sup>17</sup> Celia Stratton, Curator, 2nd Armored Division Museum, telephone interview by author, notes, Fort Leavenworth, KS, 22 November 1994.

<sup>18</sup> Headquarters, 1st Engineer Battalion, The Diehard Standard, 7.

<sup>19</sup> Headquarters, 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment, Form 108-2243-M2 (Fort Bliss: n.p., n.d.).

<sup>20</sup> Stratton, interview.

<sup>21</sup> Society of the First Division, Danger Forward: The Story of the First Division in World War II (1947; reprint, Nashville: The Battery Press, 1980), Introduction.

<sup>22</sup> Houston, xvii.

<sup>23</sup> Stratton, interview.

<sup>24</sup> Leonard Rapport and Arthur Northwood, Jr., Rendezvous With Destiny: A History of the 101st Airborne Division (Greenville, TX: 101st Airborne Division Association, 1948), 512.

<sup>25</sup> Headquarters, 559th Engineer Battalion, 559th Engineer Battalion Mug Standing Operating Procedures (Hanau: 559th Engineer Battalion, n.d.), 1.

<sup>26</sup> Field Marshal Viscount Wolseley, The Story of a Soldier's Life, 1903, as quoted in Peter G. Tsouras, Warrior's Words, 358.

The noble courage that has its origins in love of country and sense of duty is not confined to the well-born; it is to be equally found in the uneducated private soldier. What can be finer than his love of regiment, his devotion to its reputation, and his determination to protect its honour! To him 'The Regiment' is mother, sister and mistress. That its fame may live and flourish he is prepared to risk all and to die without a murmur. What other cause calls forth greater enthusiasm? It is a high, an admirable phase of patriotism, for, to the soldier, his regiment is his country.

<sup>27</sup> Society of the First Division, Danger Forward, forward.

<sup>28</sup> Harry Summers, Army Times, "When 'Ivy' Flag is Cased, Part of Our Spirit Will Go, Too," 26 December 1994, 50.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

## CHAPTER 2

### THE ARMY SYSTEM: A HISTORICAL REVIEW

Although the Army has continuously maintained an office charged with the preservation of history since March of 1918,<sup>1</sup> a review of Army historical preservation agencies, policies, and procedures over the last fifty years show a pattern of inconsistency, unfocused effort, and ultimately, hypocrisy. Inconsistency is apparent in the changing regulations, regulatory guidance, and even the institutions charged with preservation of unit heritage. Unfocused effort is evident in the decentralized preservation system, piecemeal responsibilities, and the lack of effective enforcement. Hypocrisy appears as the Army extols the great triumphs, accomplishments, and high standards units attained in the past, stressing how important it is to sustain, honor and preserve the legacy of those units, yet fields a preservation system that relies on individual initiative and external augmentation and continues to activate, inactivate, move, and reflag units. It is a preservation system, cumbersome to use, designed to preserve unit heritage, not as a rule, but by exception. As a result, a wealth of accumulated unit history, property, and customs and traditions, often accrued through grueling and heroic circumstances, has slipped away.

From the initial permanent historical office founded in 1918, many agencies have held the designation of "lead agency," responsible for the preservation of history in the Army and for Army units. These

agencies, or offices, have occupied various levels of importance in the Army hierarchy and enjoyed equally various levels of visibility and authority. Figure 1 traces the evolutionary track of the "lead" Army historical preservation agency through the period covered by this case study.

From a staff section buried in the structure of the Army War College in 1921, the responsibility of "lead" agency elevated to a historical branch buried in the structure of the Army G-2 in 1943, as history gained importance in the Army. This shift gave Army historians their first access to the Army Staff and their first opportunity to improve and implement Army wide policies and procedures for preservation of history. Unfortunately, since that access still ran through the Army G-2, who was probably more concerned with his intelligence responsibilities in World War II, the change in organization failed to produce any major shift in Army historical preservation policies or procedures.

In 1945, however, historical preservation goals moved to the forefront with the Army finally granting clear recognition to its claims that history was important. The establishment of the Historical Division as an independent office on the Army Special Staff marked the first time that history and historical preservation efforts were recognized as an Army level concern worthy of Army wide visibility, emphasis, authority, and resources.

The increasing importance and visibility of what has ultimately become the Center of Military History, is reflected in the creation and revision of historical regulations beginning in the late 1940s and their

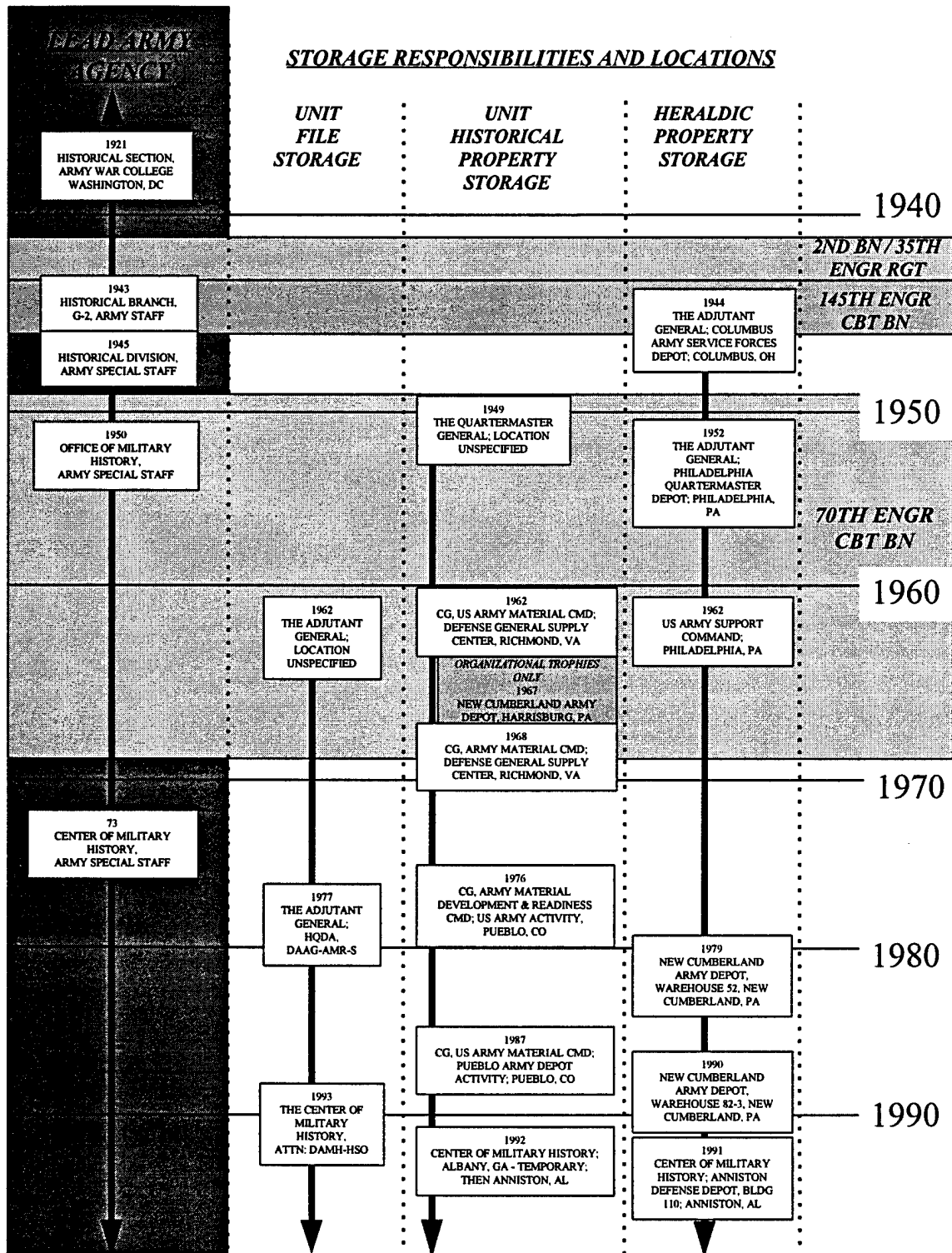


Figure 1. Evolution of the Lead Army Agency for Heritage Preservation and the Evolving Storage Responsibilities and Locations.



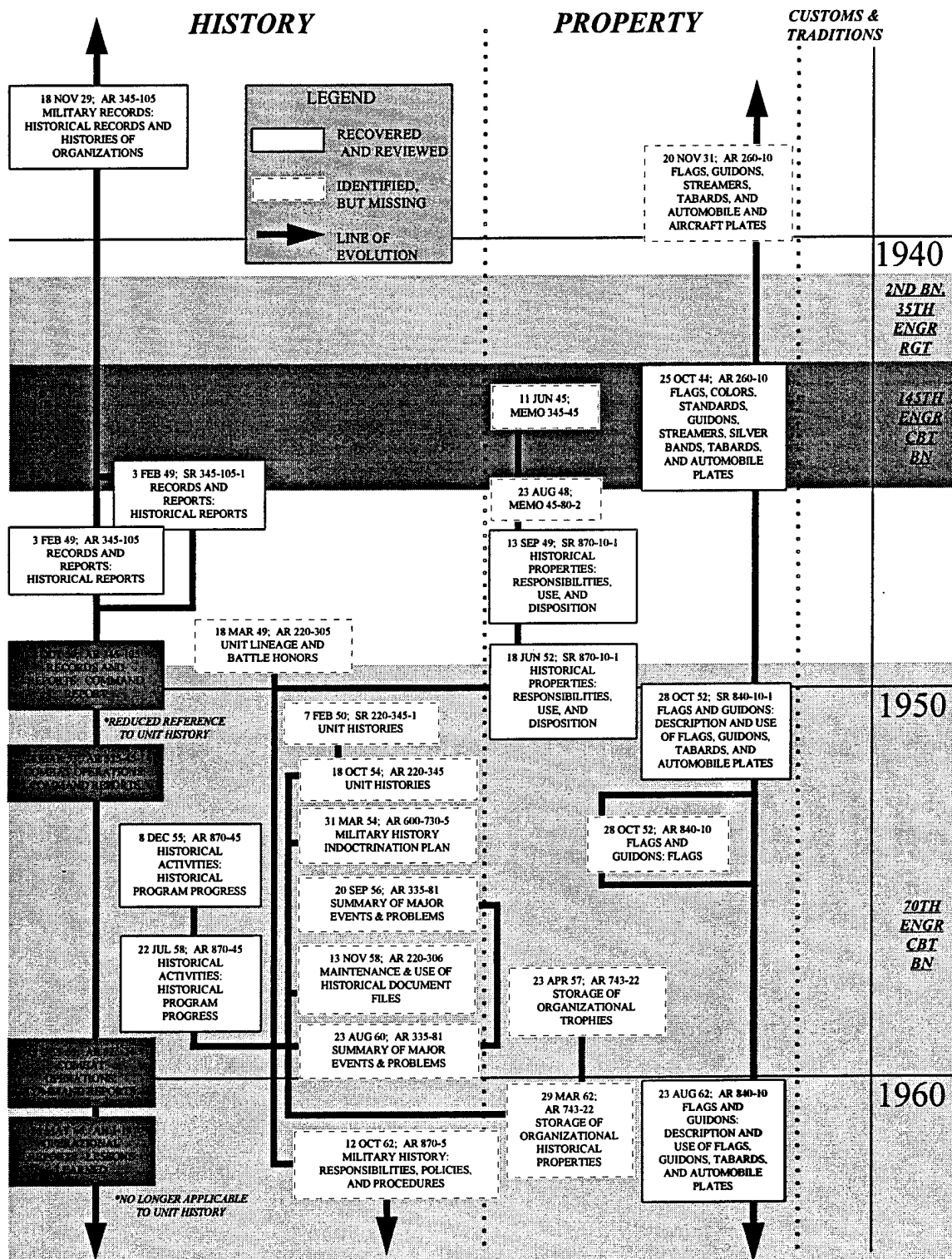


Figure 2. Evolution of Regulations: 1929-1962

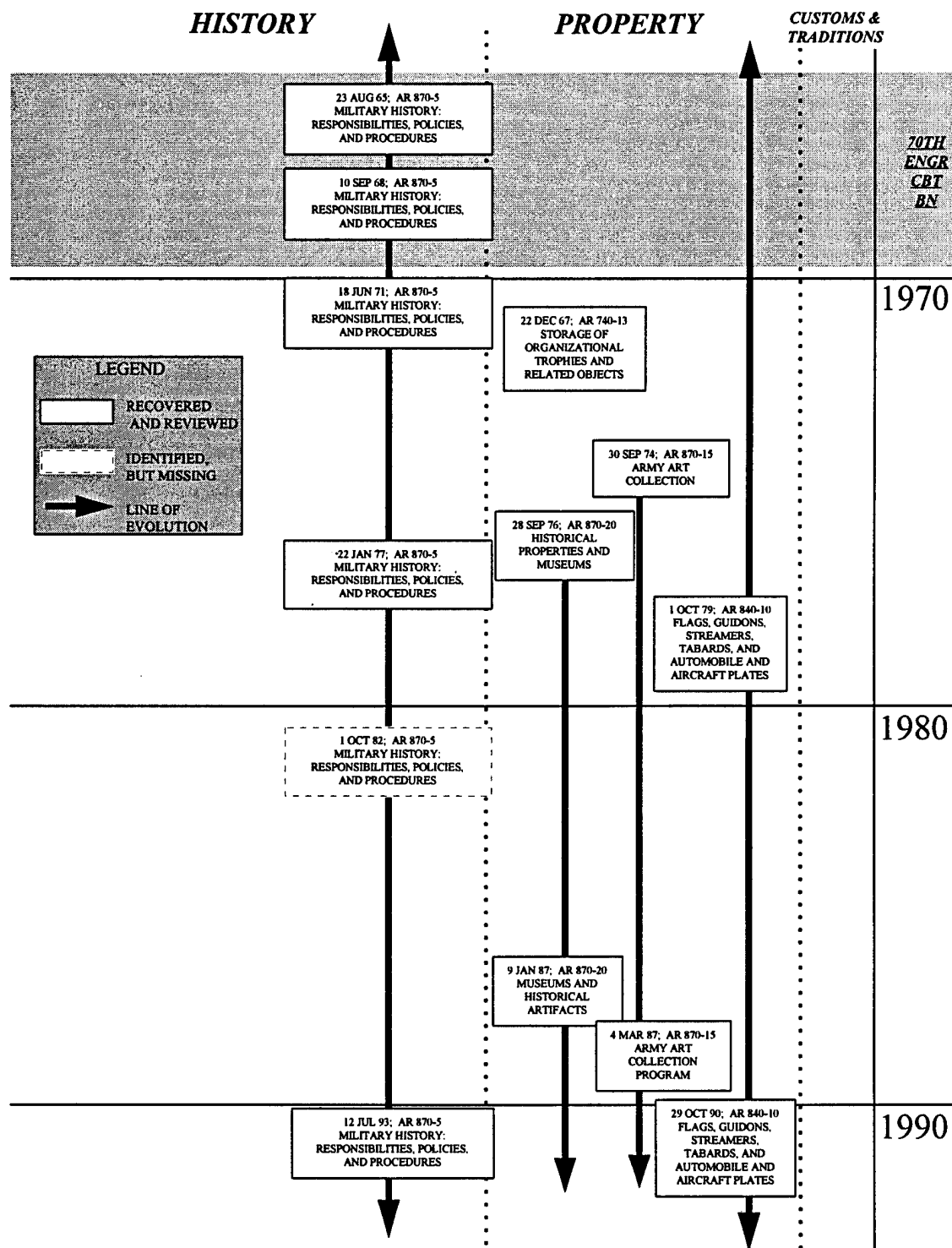


Figure 3. Evolution of Regulations: 1962-1993

slow, shifting development since then. Figures 2 and 3 show the evolution of the regulations during the period of this case study, focusing on history, property, and customs and traditions. From the macro level, it is clear that the creation of an Army level historical office in 1945 led to a major revision of the historical preservation regulations in the late 1940s. The growing influence, control, and maturity of the Army's "lead historical agency" appears in the focus, scope, and detail of the regulations.

As the agency matured, the quality of the regulations and the effectiveness and efficiency of the preservation system continued to improve. New historical preservation regulations were developed, revised, expanded, consolidated, and finally superseded by newer regulations. This review of the evolution of unit history regulations and guidance reveals several trends when observed as a whole. The first is that the preservation of history is, and has been of some concern to the Army, at least as far back as 1929, but the focus and methods of preservation have changed over time. The policies that existed in the single 1929 regulation<sup>2</sup> were actually superior to those in effect in the late 1940s and 1950s. Army Regulation 345-105, rewritten and published in 1949, marked the beginning of a "dark ages" for unit history preservation<sup>3</sup> that was not turned around until the publication of Army Regulation 870-5, version 1965 at the latest. The 870-5 was essentially a return to the basics, consolidating the numerous lesser regulations that appeared in the 1940s and 1950s and steadily evolving since then, usually for the better. Reporting requirements and documentation of unit activities for historical preservation has

remained decentralized over the years and a bottom up effort system of preservation continues.

The unit commander has always had responsibility for unit historical preservation and has ultimately been responsible for the documentation, collection, maintenance, and storage of the unit history or organizational history files. While most heritage must be initially captured and preserved by the unit that generated it, and the unit commander is the logical choice for ensuring it is properly done, the success of the entire heritage preservation program is dependent upon how much interest the commander shows in heritage, how much he understands about the system and its goals, and how well he does his job. Surprisingly, the Army has never had an enforcement system to ensure compliance with regulations and individual competence, dedication, and initiative have always been critical to the successful preservation of any heritage. Another probable source of inefficiency is the changing responsibilities and locations of stored files for inactive units, shown in figure 1, although actual physical locations of past storage locations cannot be determined from the regulations. Combined, however, the trends show a changing, confusing, voluntary, and decentralized system with no means of enforcement or assurance of compliance.

The evolution of the overall unit property regulations and guidance reveals trends similar to those pertaining to unit history. The first is that the Army originally overlooked the preservation of property, with the possible exception of heraldic items. Since the late 1940s however, unit historical property has received increasing interest

from the Army. Responsibilities and methods of preservation have also changed over time. Original policies developed in the late 1940s, sketchy and insufficient, have significantly improved. Originally carrying an Army level emphasis that omitted organizational unit property, the regulation now encompasses the entire Army structure, and like unit history, is essentially a bottom up effort system of preservation with no enforcement or assurance of compliance. The commander is still ultimately responsible for the documentation, collection, maintenance, and storage of the unit property.

Changes in the definitions of property classification and disposition instructions for inactivating units are fertile conditions for confusion and loss of property control. The numerous storage sites and changing responsibilities for storing and maintaining stored properties, shown in figure 1, have probably resulted in an unknown and indeterminable loss of property turned in for storage. Organizational trophies, or "property of transitory value," are automatically assumed to have no value worth the cost of preservation and storage, and are consciously omitted from other than short term historical preservation efforts.<sup>4</sup> Under these rules, all of the large silver marksmanship, equestrian, sports and other Post and Division Championship organizational trophies the 1st Engineer Battalion so honorably displays at Fort Riley, would have been disposed of if the unit had inactivated. Here again, the combined trends of a property regulatory review show a changing, confusing, voluntary, and decentralized system with no means of enforcement or assurance of compliance.

The evolving regulations also show a trend of changing responsibilities for stored heraldic items as shown in figure 1. While the Army has been aware of these items of property and their historical significance since before the case study period, trends similar to those found in unit history and property regulations are evident. The increasing prohibitions against personal ownership and reproduction of these materials also indicate, or infer, that the Army was experiencing a problem with misappropriation of unit colors. Again, there appears to be no system available to ensure compliance, nor enforcement responsibility assigned to anyone other than the unit commander, generally the most likely culprit.

Regulatory review of the final component of unit heritage is very easy. There are no documents or policies that specifically address the preservation of unit customs, traditions, or practices on record. Any preservation of this piece of unit heritage has been accomplished by accident, or through efforts of the unit itself, to capture and document the custom, and include it in any organizational history file that might have been preserved.

Together, these organizations, facilities, and regulations form the established Army system for the preservation of the heritage of its units. However, the deficiencies and inefficiencies of the Army historical preservation system have given rise to other means of unit heritage preservation, external to the official Army system. While unofficial publications on the preservation of unit heritage, the Army historical preservation system, and the reconstruction of lost unit heritage are scarce,<sup>5</sup> there are numerous other works available on

individual units and types of units that supplement the official preservation system. External to the Army system, but complementing it, is a trend of units, or individuals from units, publishing their own accounts in an attempt to capture events during specific time periods that are important, pivotal, or personal to them. These books tend to tell a story focusing on an individual in an organization,<sup>6</sup> the unit itself over time,<sup>7</sup> or a specific event in which a unit played a significant role.<sup>8</sup> In all three cases, however, authors indicate a need to express themselves and preserve something they did not feel the Army system could, or would, properly preserve.

The common thread that runs through all of these unofficial publications is that unit history and unit heritage are not being properly, or sufficiently, preserved by the Army. The publications all either focus on how a unit can reconstruct a heritage, do a better job of capturing and preserving heritage in the first place, or preserve some bit of unit heritage that supplements or supplants efforts of the official Army system. Indirectly, these publications are indications that the Army heritage preservation system is ineffective.

The next three chapters will assess how well the system performs its function. These chapters each focus on a specific period in the existence of the case study unit, from its original activation in 1941 as the 2nd Battalion, 35th Engineer Regiment, to its redesignation as the 145th Engineer Battalion in World War II, its redesignation as the 550th Engineer Battalion for a short time in the 1940s, and its final period of active service as the 70th Engineer Battalion in 1969. The intent is not to portray a chronological story of the unit, but to

document where and how information was obtained. As a result, information may be presented out of the chronological sequence and there may be some duplication of information to clearly credit all agencies for the preservation of information.

The chapters will first show the information the Army system originally provided Fort Riley and the reactivating Battalion, then show the information various agencies within the system possessed, but did not provide the unit until individual efforts located the agencies and, in some cases, physically extracted documents. The chapters then cover information obtained from published sources outside of the system, and finally document information obtained from nonpublished sources outside of the system.

Again, the intent is to not only show what information was obtained from where, but to show what heritage has not been recaptured, even after three years of effort on behalf of several people. The supplemental intent is to portray the feeling that if this amount of information and heritage has been recovered with three years of effort, there must be much more that has been lost from the unit's twenty-seven years of active service, eight of which were in combat. Ultimately, these next three chapters validate the perceptions gained from reviewing the evolution of institutions and regulations that establish the Army preservation system. The system is confusing, fatally flawed, and incapable of efficiently preserving unit heritage without significant revision. Unfortunately, until it is revised, every inactivation and redesignation of a unit in the current drawdown results in a significant



amount of lost individual unit heritage, as well as a loss of overall heritage of the Army.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Stetson Conn, Historical Work in the United States Army: 1862-1954 (Washington: U.S. Army Center of Military History, 1980).

<sup>2</sup> All of the current unit historical preservation regulations trace their origins back to Army Regulation 345-105, originally entitled Military Records: Historical Records and Histories of Organizations in 1929.<sup>2</sup> This regulation was clear, succinct and directive in nature, requiring "each regiment, battalion not forming part of a regiment, and independent company, troop, battery, or similarly organized unit" to maintain a detailed history of the unit. The commanding officer of the organization was clearly responsible for preparing and maintaining the history, and the expected contents were dictated:

The history . . . will contain information concerning the original formation, recruitment, changes in organization, increase and decrease in strength, stations of the organization or parts thereof, arrival at the stations and departure therefrom, marches, campaigns, battles, etc. It should specifically give the names of all commanding officers in important engagements and also the names of officers and men killed and wounded in action and of the present or former members of the organization who may have specially distinguished themselves, stating the rewards and decorations received. The authority for every statement of fact should be cited and copies of orders or citation attached. Efforts will be made to obtain photographs and to perpetuate the memory and deeds of members and former members of the organization who have distinguished themselves.

<sup>3</sup> The overall emphasis of the regulation indicated a significant shift away from history, deleting all references to unit history, historical preservation, and history programs, and focusing entirely on the purpose and content of the Command Report, including preparation and distribution instructions.

<sup>4</sup> Department of the Army, AR 740-13, Storage of Organizational Trophies and Related Objects (Washington: Government Printing Office, 22 December 1967).

<sup>5</sup> Four publications are closely related to this thesis, each with a slightly different emphasis. The first is Organizational History, a pamphlet prepared by the U.S. Army Center of Military History. It is an excellent, concise, document stressing the value of preserving unit history and prepared by "historians in the Organizational History Branch, Center of Military History." Designed to furnish commanders with the basic guidance needed to carry out their historical responsibilities in the Army preservation system, it also describes and lists other government agencies that have a role in the preservation of unit histories. Focusing primarily on the historical and unit property components of unit heritage, the pamphlet does not

assess the Army system for preserving unit heritage, nor does it devote much effort to the preservation of customs, traditions and ceremonies of units.

The second publication, also related to the U.S. Army Center of Military History, is Historical Work in the United States Army: 1862-1954, written by Stetson Conn, former Chief Historian of the U.S. Army Center of Military History. It is essentially the unit history of the Center of Military History and records the "evolution and accomplishments of official historical work in the Army." While failing to detail the organizational history of any specific units, it does document the evolution of the CMH, its mission and priorities. It also describes the changing resources as the Center develops, to include personnel and administrative assets, that significantly affect the performance of the CMH and its predecessors. The book is invaluable in tracing the evolution of policies and priorities regarding the preservation of organizational unit history and the internal and external factors that helped shape them. It covers very little about property and nothing about customs, traditions and practices in units.

The Officer's Call, an Army professional journal, published an article entitled Harness Your History in 1954, focusing on the promotion of unit activities supporting organizational "history, customs, and traditions." Unit commanders are the primary audience of this article that strongly promotes the value of history in every unit. Allocating several pages to identifying information sources and how the history of a unit is collected and documented, the article spends the remaining pages discussing how to put a "unit history to work" and includes several recommendations on history, tradition, ceremony, symbology and historical objects.

The article advocates writing and publishing unit histories, even suggesting a distribution of topics: General history of the unit (10%); Unit accomplishments (50%); Notable Former Members (10%); Unit symbols (15%); Current unit mission (10%); and other topics (5%) special to the unit. Establishing a unit museum or "treasure room" to house and display items of historical value and interest is recommended as a visible testament that a unit possesses heritage considered important and worthy of preservation, pride, and respect. The article stresses the importance of customs and traditions, referred to as "intangible symbols," and recommends that units explain the origins, meanings and histories of traditions to unit members to ingrain the traditions and ensure members understand why customs are practiced. Finally, the article promotes a schedule of events for a unit organization day that will look very familiar to anyone reviewing the 1929 Army regulation on Historical Records and Histories of Organizations.

The latest publication related to this thesis is an article entitled, "How to Write Engineer Unit History," by Dr. Barry Fowle of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Office for History. Although a short two pages and essentially a highlight of the Organizational History pamphlet prepared by the U.S. Army Center of Military History, the article focuses primarily on how to reconstruct a unit history and puts a personal perspective on the issue. Interestingly, Fowle reports that

a personal perspective on the issue. Interestingly, Fowle reports that while history always serves an important purpose in all military organizations, it often becomes most important to individual members of a unit, years after they leave the unit and the Army.

<sup>6</sup> Charles B. MacDonalds' Company Commander and James R. McDonoughs' Platoon Leader, are classic examples of an individual in a unit. Most are autobiographical in nature and deal with events and actions revolving around the central character, thus preserving his story and perception of events. While telling these personal, first hand accounts, they also paint a story of the organizations and associated events.

<sup>7</sup> Publications telling the story of a unit over time generally look at the broadest picture, incorporating information on higher and adjacent friendly units, the enemy, and political and historical perspectives. These works are most often documentary in nature, focusing on preservation of unit deeds by capturing the encompassing events, and again, seek to satisfy a desire to preserve the heritage of a unit and capture episodes that are important, pivotal, or personal to them. The Society of the First Division, for example, published Danger Forward: The Story of the First Division in World War II, that is a compilation of a number of first hand accounts chronicling Division actions during the Second World War, primarily for the pleasure of the veterans of the Big Red One. The Army Corps of Engineers published Builders and Fighters: U.S. Army Engineers in World War II; a history focused on engineer forces in the war, to "recognize and honor the deeds of the men and women of the Corps who served as builders and fighters in World War II." Works have already hit the bookstores on units in the Persian Gulf war. Tom Carhart, a former Army officer who served in the Vietnam war, authored Iron Soldiers, chronicling 1st Armored Division participation in Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm.

<sup>8</sup> The actions of a unit participating in a specific event are epitomized by works like Pork Chop Hill and Hamburger Hill. These books are very similar to those focusing on a unit over time except they limit time to a specific event. They are also documentary in nature, but focus more on a specific event, with information preserving the deeds of the unit captured as a by-product. S.L.A. Marshall captured the 48 hour battle of Pork Chop Hill in Korea and with it a superlative picture of elements of the 7th Infantry Division in action. Samuel Zaffiri did the same for the 3rd Battalion, 187th Infantry, when he wrote of the fight for Hamburger Hill in Viet Nam 16 years later. Another excellent example of an author focusing on a unit for a specified amount of time is The Damned Engineers by Jane Hot Giles. Giles, the wife of a 291st veteran, concentrated on the 291st Battalion and actions during the Battle of the Bulge, highlighted by the destruction of the key, Neufmolin bridge that blunted the German offensive. None of these authors actually participated in the events with the units they immortalized, as is the case for most of these types of works. More so

than in the previous two areas, these efforts are often undertaken by professional historians.

### CHAPTER 3

#### THE HERITAGE OF THE 2nd BATTALION, 35th ENGINEER REGIMENT:

15 JULY 1941 TO 24 SEPTEMBER 1943

##### Heritage Provided by the System

The U.S. Army Center for Military History provided a Statement of Service for the 70th Engineer Battalion, in response to an information request from Fort Riley. The one and one half page Statement of Service outlined only the very basic history of the unit. Originally constituted on 1 October 1933 in the Regular Army as the 2nd Battalion, 35th Engineer Regiment, and activated at Fort Snelling, Minnesota, on 15 July 1941, the battalion earned a Meritorious Unit Commendation embroidered ALCAN HIGHWAY and was reorganized and redesignated as the 145th Engineer Combat Battalion on 25 September 1943.<sup>1</sup> Very little history, and nothing about the property,<sup>2</sup> or customs and traditions, came from the CMH. Obviously, the unit received a major Army award for actions during this period, but there was no information on when, or why the unit received the award, and no accompanying citation, certificate, or streamer. There was no explanation that the name embroidered on the Commendation streamer referred to the Alaska-Canada Highway. There was no other information provided about a heritage, shaped by real people, with real efforts, trials and tribulations, trying to succeed in real missions the Army had assigned them. The 70th reactivation Project Officer, with a tremendous

amount of time and effort, began reconstructing this heritage from pieces, obtained from multiple sources, both within and without the Army historical preservation system.

#### Heritage Possessed but Not Proffered by the System

The Army preservation system possessed additional information on the heritage of the battalion, but rather than provide it as part of a "reactivation package," Fort Riley had to first identify and locate the system sources, then request any available information. The National Archives and Records Administration, official depository of permanently valuable outdated records of the Federal Government, did not acknowledge possession of any written records pertaining to either the 2nd Battalion, 35th Engineer Regiment, or the regiment itself.<sup>3</sup> The Still Pictures Branch of the Archives, however, did provide copies of two photographs showing the 35th Engineer Regiment in action on the ALCAN Highway construction project.<sup>4</sup> The U.S. Army Military History Institute, the Army repository for personal papers and published unit histories, also failed to identify any holdings on the units.<sup>5</sup>

Using a copy of the Statement of Service as justification, Fort Riley requested certificates and orders for the battalion's unit awards, including the Meritorious Unit Award, from the Total Army Personnel Command.<sup>6</sup> Confirmation of the unit award was discovered soon after in an Army Pamphlet that listed the unit, period covered, order number and date.<sup>7</sup> Four months later certificates and orders arrived, finally documenting the reasons for the award and adding the first human dimension to the growing battalion heritage.

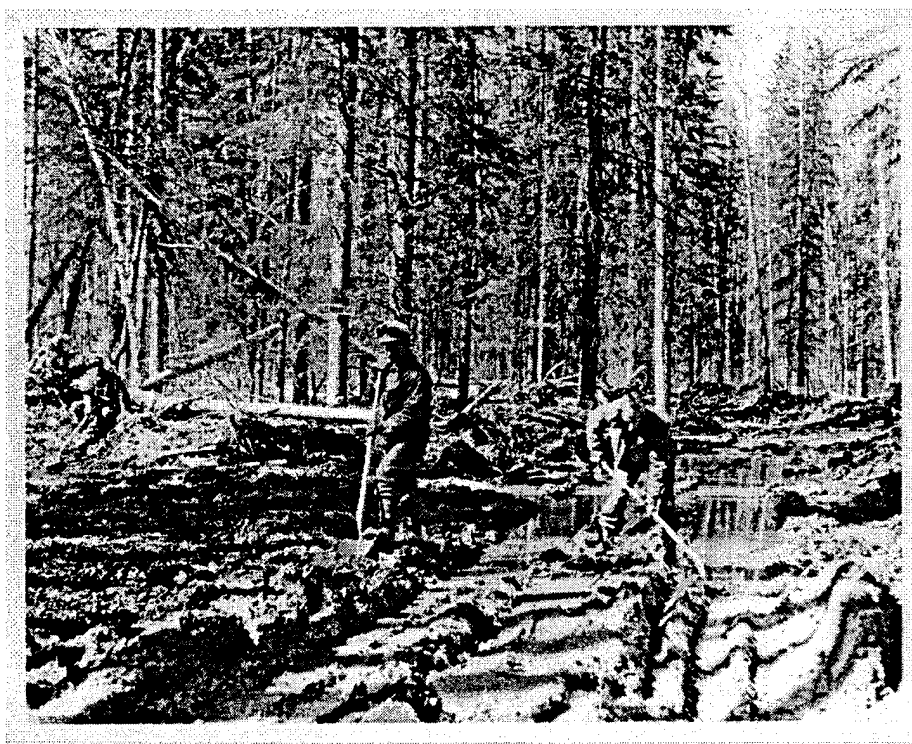


Figure 4. Members of Company F, 35th Engineer Regiment drain a ditch, 19 April 1942. Source: National Archives, Still Picture Branch, 35th Engineer Regiment files, Washington, D.C.

The units listed below are cited for meritorious conduct in the construction of the Canadian-Alaskan Military Highway during the period March to October 1942: . . . 35th Engineer Regiment . . . The above units were charged with the task of constructing a 1,600-mile highway from Fort St. John, British Columbia, Canada, to Slana, Alaska, 'with all speed within the physical capacity of the troops.' The general route selected for the highway lay across vast areas of almost impenetrable wilderness, vaguely mapped and but little known. Commencing with the spring thaw and continuing through the summer floods, the troops overcame the difficulties imposed by mountainous terrain, deep muskeg, torrential streams, heavy forests, and an ever-lengthening supply line. By virtue of remarkable engineering ability, ingenious improvisation, and unsurpassed devotion to duty, the units assigned to the highway construction completed their mission in one short working season, and thereby opened a supply road to Alaska that is of inestimable strategic value to the war effort of their country.<sup>8</sup>





Figure 5. 35th Engineer Regiment Caterpillar mired while digging Culvert at Milepost 31.0, 13 June 1942. Source: National Archives, Still Picture Branch, 35th Engineer Regiment files, Washington, D.C.

While conducting initial research into the history of the battalion, Fort Riley asked the CMH why the unit had no campaign credit for this period of the war. Since the ALCAN Highway was constructed to

support the war effort against the Japanese, it seemed logical that the unit would be entitled to the Pacific Theater campaign streamer. CMH pointed out that technically, the ALCAN fell within the American Theater of operations, and campaign credit should be granted.<sup>9</sup> The new Lineage and Honors Certificate corrected this oversight and authorized campaign participation credit for the American Theater and an American Theater streamer without inscription.<sup>10</sup>

The final details obtained from the system came with a physical review of the CMH records, conducted in conjunction with this thesis, two years after the initial efforts to reactivate the battalion. This record review revealed the Army possessed additional historical information not provided to the reactivating unit. That information, considering how much Fort Riley learned from the Statement of Service, was considerable. Reviewed here, dry and sterile as it is, it provides much more historical detail and invaluable leads for historical research and heritage reconstruction, and yet, was not forwarded to the battalion. The 35th Engineer Regiment (General Service) was originally constituted, on paper, as a Regular Army unit in a letter dated 18 August 1933, and assigned to the I Corps Area effective 1 October 1933. The regiment, still a paper unit, was transferred to the III Corps Area on 5 June 1936. It was redesignated as the 35th Engineer Regiment (Combat) (Corps) on 16 December 1940 under Table of Organization 5-176, 1940, and authorized activation at Camp Joseph T. Robinson, Arkansas.<sup>11</sup> That authorization was amended in January 1941 to announce an activation date in June 1941, and amended again in April 1941 to announce activation in August 1941 at Fort Snelling, Minnesota. The regiment

actually activated at Fort Snelling on 15 July 1941 and began receiving people and equipment.<sup>12</sup> It is here, one assumes, that the unit begins to create a complete heritage, with history, property, and customs and traditions.

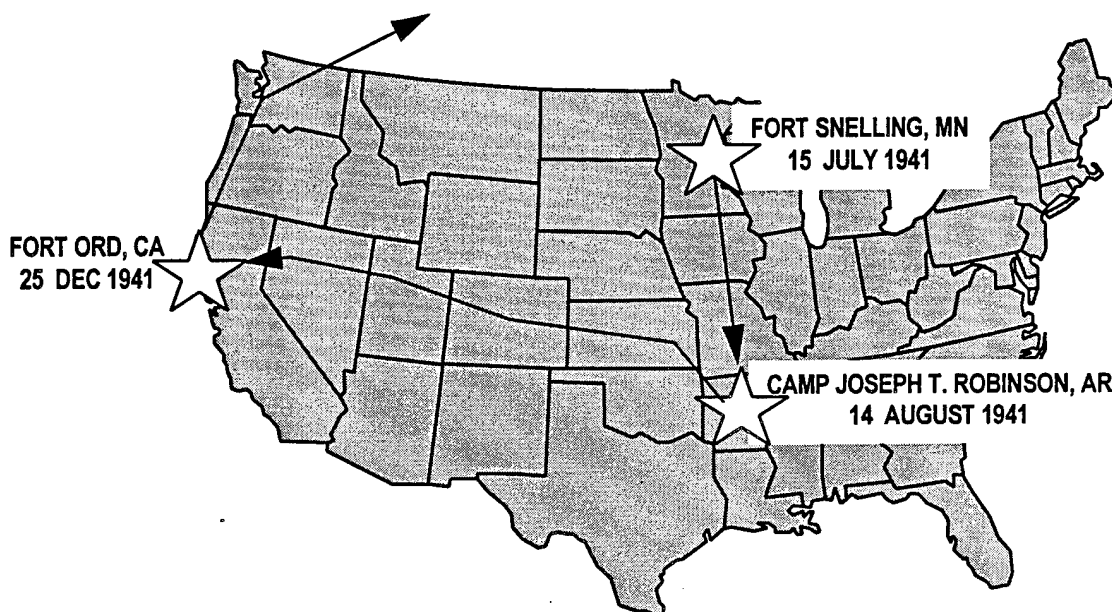


Figure 6. Movements of the 35th Regiment, 1941-1942.

The regiment moved to Camp Robinson, Arkansas, arriving on 14 August 1941, and remained there until 20 December 1941, when it moved to Fort Ord, California. It departed Fort Ord on 10 March 1942, enroute to Canada, stopping at Dunsmuir, California, on 11 March, and Portland, Oregon, on 12 March. It arrived at Dawson Creek, British Columbia, Canada on 13 March 1942, where it was reassigned to the Northwest Service Command, converted to a new 1942 version of Table of Organization 5--175, and earned a Meritorious Unit Commendation for work

constructing the Alaska-Canada (ALCAN) highway. The Commendation was awarded on 15 April 1943, "for outstanding service in the construction of the Canadian-Alaskan Military Highway from March to October 1942."<sup>13</sup>

The regiment remained in Canada until 28 August 1943, when it returned to Camp White, Oregon, on 1 September 1943 and was assigned to IV Corps.<sup>14</sup> The 35th Regiment inactivated on 25 September 1943 and its subordinate units were reorganized and redesignated. The Headquarters and Headquarters Service Company became the Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1122nd Engineer Combat Group. The 1st Battalion, 35th Regiment became the 35th Engineer Combat Battalion, and the 2nd Battalion became the 145th Engineer Combat Battalion.<sup>15</sup>

Once again, the CMH files, like all of the other pieces obtained from the Army historical preservation system, proved to be a mixed blessing. While information from the files substantially embellished the technical history of the battalion, it did nothing to enhance the knowledge of property or customs and traditions. The historical aspect of the picture was clearer, but was still far from complete. System sources provided information that acknowledged the existence and presence of the unit, but other sources would have to fill in the missing information, particularly the human aspects, and give the heritage life. Further details to the battalion heritage had to come from sources outside the Army historical preservation system, details the system had failed to preserve.

## Heritage Found Outside the System

### Published External Sources

The first source of information, completely external to the Army preservation system, came from exploiting the accomplishments of the unit. The primary mission and legacy of the 35th Regiment in its short existence is undoubtedly the ALCAN Highway, and information on the project is substantial. Numerous works on Army Engineers in World War II and the ALCAN project capture generic historical information on the effort and indirectly document regimental accomplishments.<sup>16</sup> U.S. and Canadian leaders deemed the ALCAN critical to the defense of Alaska and Western Canada and envisioned a secure inland route. No road existed prior to the project and much of the proposed route lay in unexplored and unmapped territory. The route itself was nothing more than a series of "best options" linking existing Northwest air ferry staging airfields at Fort St. John, Fort Nelson, Watson Lake, and Whitehorse, Canada, with Alaskan airfields at Northway and Big Delta.<sup>17</sup> The project plan entailed two phases, the first cutting an initial pioneer road using quickly mobilized and deployable Army Engineer units, followed by civilian contract work under control of the U.S. Public Roads Administration, to upgrade the pioneer road to a permanent highway.<sup>18</sup> Commanded by Brigadier General William M. Hoge, the 1500 mile long project was executed by a 9,200 man provisional engineer brigade consisting of the 18th, 35th, 93rd, 340th, 341st (Cadred by personnel from the 35th) and later the 95th and 97th Engineer Regiments. The Brigade was also assigned two Light Pontoon engineer companies, topographic survey companies, and numerous support elements. Key to the

success of the project was the movement of the 35th Engineer Regiment, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Robert D. Ingalls, from Dawson Creek to Fort Nelson.<sup>19</sup> Completion of the project in the required single short arctic construction season of 1942 meant the 35th would have to conduct a winter march north and cross "the unbridged 1,800 foot wide Peace River south of Fort St. John while the river ice could still support traffic."<sup>20</sup> The 35th "had to carry 150 days of equipment, supplies, and spare parts, as well as 60 days of rations because Fort Nelson would only be accessible by air for some time after the thaw."<sup>21</sup>

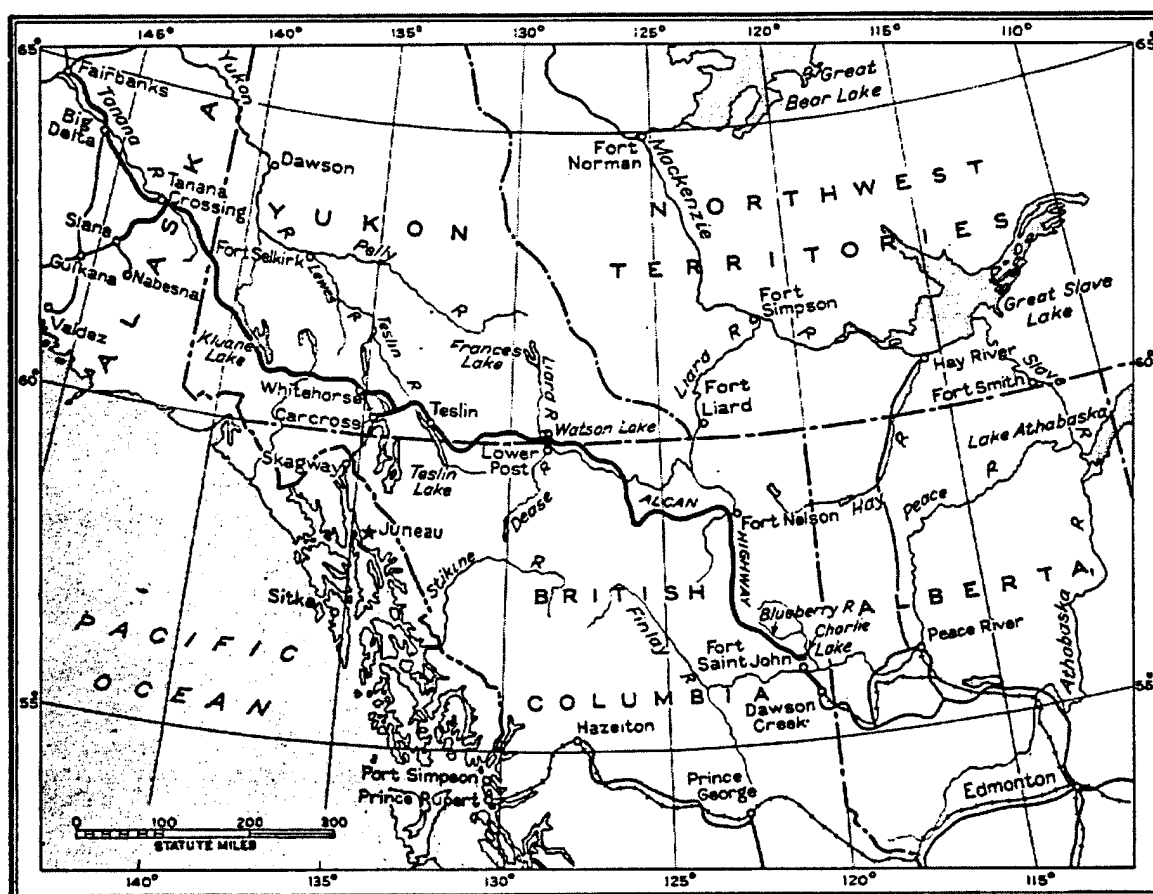


Figure 7. Route of the ALCAN Highway. Source: Reprinted from Clarence L. Sturdevant, "The Military Road to Alaska: Organization and Administrative Problems," *The Military Engineer*, April 1943.

The engineers first insulated the Peace River crossing against sudden warming with a thick layer of sawdust and then reinforced it with heavy wooden planks. By late March, 1,900 officers and men; over 900 tons of supplies and equipment; 429,000 imperial gallons of oil products; and carryalls, graders, power shovels, compressors, trucks, and ten 23-ton Caterpillar D-8 tractors had crossed the river and were trekking north toward Fort Nelson in temperatures as low as -35 [degrees] F. On 5 April the last elements reached Fort Nelson.<sup>22</sup>

The 35th achieved mission success when the engineers from 35th and 340th Regiments linked their portions of the road on 24 September 1942, finally connecting Fort St. John to Whitehorse. The ALCAN officially opened two months later when the first truck from Dawson Creek reached Fairbanks. The 35th Regiment was officially credited with the construction of 337 miles of road during the five month effort, an average of almost two and one quarter miles a day through unmapped wilderness, forests, peat bogs, mountains, and waterways.<sup>23</sup>

#### Unpublished External Sources

Former members of the battalion have worked hard to obtain additional pieces and preserve the heritage of the 2nd Battalion, 35th Engineer Regiment. Orville C. Hovey compiled, and Lieutenant Colonel (Retired) Robert J. Greenwalt edited, a booklet for their former comrades containing a wealth of newspaper clippings, unit documents and photographs, including a copy of the regimental activation and inactivation orders. Hovey reconstructed the details of unit operations from the regimental "Daily Logs," dated 15 July 1941 to 25 August 1942, that he obtained from the National Archives.<sup>24</sup> These reconstructed logs

and personal interviews finally add a significant personal aspect to the heritage of the unit and prove that much has been lost.

The 35th Regiment activated at Fort Snelling on 15 July 1941 and was assigned to the VII Corps Area with a total personnel strength of one technical sergeant, present since 28 June 1941. Lieutenant Colonel Robert D. Ingalls, Regimental Commander, arrived for duty on 19 July and by the end of July the regimental strength had ballooned to 26 officers and nine soldiers. Time at Fort Snelling was spent on weapons training, drill and ceremonies training, and learning engineer songs. Receiving orders to move to Camp Joseph T. Robinson, Arkansas, on 5 August 1941, regimental officers and noncommissioned officers departed on 6 August and arrived four days later. On 18 August, Major Twitchell was assigned as Regimental Executive Officer, Lieutenant Coates as S-1 /Adjutant, Lieutenant Graf as S-3/Operations Officer, and Lieutenant Westling as S-4/Supply Officer. On 21 August, the Regimental Commander conducted officer education classes that included discussions on guard duty, morale, reporting to the Commander, and regimental songs. Training continued on military courtesy, physical training, wear of uniforms, the military justice systems, and many other basic areas. On 25 August 1941, the officers received first notification of deployment for maneuver training starting on 10 September 1941 and received assignments to companies in anticipation of the first large influx of 175 soldiers on 28 August.

An additional 399 soldiers arrived on 2 September and training continued until participation in the Louisiana Maneuvers in the vicinity of Coldwater, Robeline, Zeuolle, and Bryceland, Louisiana, 21 September



to 6 October. Upon returning to Camp Robinson, the regiment participated in a homecoming parade for the 35th Infantry Division in Little Rock, Arkansas, on 10 October. The first regimental wedding took place on 12 October, when Lieutenant Greenwalt married. Military training and minor construction efforts continued to occupy the regiment's time at Camp Robinson. On 8 December, the regiment assembled at 11:30 and listened to President Roosevelt's radio address calling for a declaration of war. On 13 December, the officers and their wives decorated the officers club for Christmas, but that night the regiment was recalled and ordered to prepare for movement.

It departed on 20 December, loading onto three trains and traveling across Kansas, to Pueblo, Colorado, then through the Royal Gorge to Salt Lake City, Utah. Traveling across Nevada, the trains arrived at Castorville, Fort Ord, and Watsonville Junction, California, at 0900, 1000, and 1500 hours respectively on Christmas day. Training and minor construction work continued, interspersed with sightseeing tours and alerts against possible Japanese attack. On 1 February, Lieutenant Colonel Ingalls assembled the officers and noncommissioned officers to review the history of the regiment, the adopted regimental slogans, and the regimental creed and doctrine. The officers of the regiment were formally introduced to the noncommissioned officers and the afternoon concluded with the singing of engineer songs. Unfortunately, none of these slogans, creeds, doctrine or songs were recorded here, or in other associated documents, and represent a significant loss in the heritage of the battalion.

On 5 March, Company B departed California for Canada as the advance party for the regimental deployment. They crossed into Canada on 8 March, arriving at Dawson Creek on 10 March where they began reception preparations. The First Platoon departed for Fort Nelson, British Columbia, on 13 March, completing the 300-mile journey over rough sled trails in 23 hours. The main body of the regiment departed Fort Ord on 10 March and arrived at Dawson Creek six days later. The heavy equipment train arrived on 17 March and movement towards Fort Nelson began two days later. The regiment closed on Fort Nelson on 4 April and the official beginning of the ALCAN highway project for the 35th occurred on Easter Sunday, 5 April 1942, when five miles of road were cleared. The 35th constructed the first Trestle bridge across the Raspberry River on 16 May and a temporary pontoon bridge over the Kledo River on 7 June. The latter was replaced by a "12 trestle bent fixed bridge" on 26 June. Construction of many other bridges of various types would follow.

The construction mission was daunting enough, but the great Northwest provided its own special challenges. A torrential rain drenched the area on 9 June 1942, causing the Kledo River to rise six feet the following day. The current and debris in the water tore the pontoon bridge loose, swinging it back towards one bank where engineers quickly dismantled it. The bridge was reconstructed two days later. On 8 August, a "huge cinnamon bear" attacked Private Murphy, from Company A, while Murphy was fishing.<sup>25</sup> "It followed him into the river when he [Murphy] leaped and struck him [Murphy] several times, bruising his [Murphy's] arm. Murphy finally escaped by swimming under water."<sup>26</sup> The

regimental photographer was injured the same day while photographing a forest fire near the Todd River. That same forest fire delayed operations in the area for several days, particularly in the construction of the bridge spanning the river. The strangest incident occurred on 18 August.

An emergency operation was performed by Captain Stotts at Mile 209 on Private Moore of A Company who had been seriously struck by a falling tree. To remove a blood clot on the brain, Captain Stotts had to use several carpenter tools such as a hack saw and electric drill. The operation was successful in so far as it had increased the odds of the patient living. A tent was pitched over the patient and the road routed around the site.<sup>27</sup>

One of the last entries in the reconstructed "Daily Logs" was that Private Moore was evacuated on 23 August and died at the Station Hospital at Fort Snelling, Minnesota on 25 August.

The reconstructed "Historical Information" letter contained in Greenwalt and Hovey's booklet provides additional information documenting the activities of the regiment from 25 August 1942 to 24 February 1943. From the beginning of the project, the regiment had completed 23 primary, multispan bridges totaling 5,230 feet, and numerous smaller single span bridges. Combined, the total length of bridges constructed would span over a mile. The 35th completed their portion of the pioneer road, linking up with the 340th Engineer Regiment on 24 September 1942 at Contact Creek. The regiment immediately reversed direction and began work to improve and finish the trail they had cut, as well as reduce all grades along it to less than ten percent. It continued to improve and maintain the road throughout the winter. The regiment also repaired bridges along the highway, cleared emergency landing strips, and cut over 250 miles of additional trails off the

highway to link up with other roads and facilities. Colonel Ingalls passed on command of the 35th to Major J.A. McCarty on 6 September 1942.

Greenwalt and Hovey's sources dried up at this point and the rest of the "Daily Logs" of the 35th Regiment are unaccounted for. The accomplishments of the regiment, their daily activities, their adventures and dangers during the remaining period on the ALCAN and their trip back to Oregon, are missing. It is only through the initiative of individuals, like Greenwalt and Hovey, that this final amount of detail has survived.

Lieutenant Colonel (Retired) Greenwalt and the other veterans of the regiment, if one can identify and locate them, are the final variable in the reconstruction equation. Potentially, the most lucrative source of information and documents, the number of these soldiers has declined over the fifty years since they came out of the Northwest wilderness. Memories have faded and events have blurred, yet they are still an untapped resource. During an interview with Greenwalt, he provided further details on life in the 2nd Battalion and the 35th Regiment.<sup>28</sup>

According to Greenwalt, the battalions were rather loose organizations that were of secondary importance to the regiment, especially during the ALCAN construction where construction teams worked independently and reported directly to the regiment.<sup>29</sup> There is little record of who commanded the 2nd Battalion, 35th Regiment, although the "Daily Logs" confirm that Lieutenant John C. Pappas commanded the battalion, effective 23 August 1941. He probably commanded until his departure for Fort Belvoir, Virginia, on 16 June 1942, but there is no

indication who, if anyone, commanded before Pappas, how long he commanded, nor who replaced him. Greenwalt remembers that Lieutenant (later Captain and Major) James A. McCarty, commanded the 2nd Battalion at some point, then moved on to become the Regimental Commander. Again, there is no documentation indicating when he commanded, nor who, preceded or succeeded him. When the battalion redesignated as the 145th Engineer Battalion on 25 September 1943 at Camp White, Oregon, activation orders show Captain Wyman P. Boynton as Commander, although there is no indication as to how long he had been in command nor whom he had succeeded.

The "Daily Logs" also refer to "sizing formation" on 28 August 1942. According to Greenwalt, Colonel Ingalls had a son attending West Point, where cadets were "sized" and assigned to units based on their height. The tallest were assigned to Company A, the next tallest to Company B, and so on. Colonel Ingalls liked this concept, since it looked good on the parade ground, but it was also difficult to maintain, restricted physical capabilities of units, and was eventually abandoned.

Greenwalt remembers his unit repairing roads at the Fort Robinson rifle range when Colonel Ingalls' wife drove up and informed them of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. He remembers a Christmas dinner of cold coffee and ham sandwiches as he and the rest of the regiment arrived at Fort Ord in December of 1942. He explained how units of the regiment received orders to bivouac on the beaches near Fort Ord every weekend and holiday as a contingency against a Japanese invasion of California.

He confirmed that the battalion and regiment had no distinctive unit insignia, unit crest, or unit nickname. He also could not remember any unit property that he considered, then or now, historically significant.<sup>30</sup> The unit did not have a unit patch until they arrived at Fort Ord, where they wore the 4th Army patch. It was removed when they deployed to Alaska and joined the Northwest Service Command, then replaced when they returned to Camp White, Oregon. Greenwalt did not remember the creed referred to in the "Daily Logs," but he did remember the motto "Shoot and Salute," which evolved while the unit was stationed at Camp Robinson. It died out once work on the ALCAN was underway and it was never revived.<sup>31</sup> The regiment did have a unit song that began with, "We are the US Army Engineers, soldiers true are we . . ." but he no longer remembered the rest of the words or the tune.<sup>32</sup> He was not aware of a 2nd Battalion or regimental mascot, but his company, Company B, brought back a Husky pup from Canada when they returned to Oregon. They smuggled the dog across the border in the ladies restroom on the train and Greenwalt remembers it was "quite large" when the company turned it over to another unit before deploying to Europe.

The only two customs or traditions he remembers both stemmed from directives issued by Colonel Ingalls. He required every officer to carry a "swagger stick" to keep their hands out of their pockets, and required every officer to purchase and wear overcoats. Greenwalt stated the latter policy did not go over well when they were required to spend \$45 out of their \$125 monthly pay on a coat.<sup>33</sup> These are all examples of memories that were never documented and were preserved here only through the strangest of coincidences.<sup>34</sup>

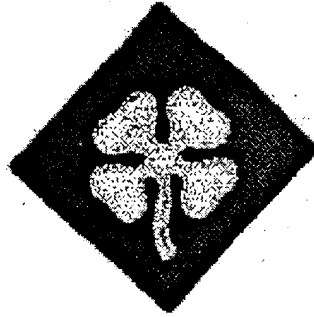


Figure 8. Shoulder patch of the 4th Army. Source: Reprinted from Richard W. Smith and Roy A. Pelz, Shoulder Sleeve Insignia of the U.S. Army, 1946-1976 (Evansville, IN: University of Evansville Press, 1978), 3 and 18.<sup>35</sup>

Obviously, other veterans and more indepth and lengthy interviews would uncover additional pearls of heritage. Unfortunately, these founding fathers of the 70th Engineer Battalion comprise a dwindling resource. Time and age have taken their toll on both the memories of the men, and their population. Once they are gone, the heritage the preservation system has failed to capture will go with them.

#### Assessment

The situation, however, could be far worse. We have been able to reconstruct a substantial portion of the heritage of the 2nd Battalion, 35th Engineer Regiment from multiple sources, both within and without the Army historical preservation system. The first paragraph of this chapter captured the sum total of the information the Army provided the reactivating 70th Engineer Battalion at Fort Riley in 1992. Unfortunately, even this small amount required a request; nothing was

automatically sent to the unit. The heritage the system has preserved was located and requested, piece by piece, by the reactivation Project Officer; "pulled" instead of "pushed."

Interestingly, elements of the system are not even certain of what they have and do not have. The National Archives, when queried for information on the 2nd Battalion, 35th Engineer Regiment and the 35th Regiment itself, responded that they had nothing on file. Yet, Hovey and Greenwalt had found copies of the regimental "Daily Logs" there.

It is fortunate, that with individual effort and initiative, one can find a large amount of general information on the ALCAN highway construction in the numerous historical publications that reference the project. Occasionally, buried in the publications, one finds specific references to the 35th and their accomplishments.

By far, the largest, most valuable information recovered on the unit during this time period was through private individuals and their personal efforts. Greenwalt and Hovey have done a tremendous job capturing a historical portion of the battalion and regimental heritage. The interview with Greenwalt enhanced the human dimension of the heritage and interviews with other veterans would undoubtedly add even more. Unfortunately, pieces are still unaccounted for. The period covering the remaining time the regiment spent on the ALCAN and their trip back to Oregon is missing. The regimental song, motto, and creed referenced in the reconstructed "Daily Logs" remain casualties. Although another veteran may remember them, Greenwalt admits too many years have passed for him to recall the details. Other unit customs and traditions, as well as unit property, have been forgotten, if they ever



existed at all. We may never know. Tragically, one must assume that much more heritage has been lost if this amount has been reconstructed after 50 years. We will never know for certain, what, and how much, has been lost and is no longer available to future generations.

### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Statement of Service for the 70th Engineer Battalion, U.S. Army Center for Military History (Cited hereafter as CMH), n.d.

<sup>2</sup> CMH, letter to 1st Infantry Division, 4 November 1992.

<sup>3</sup> National Archives (Cited hereafter as NA), letter to author, 28 December 1992.

<sup>4</sup> NA, letter to author, 17 November 1992.

<sup>5</sup> U.S. Army Military History Institute, letter to author, 23 September 1992.

<sup>6</sup> 1st Engineer Battalion, letter to Total Army Personnel Command, 26 August 1992.

<sup>7</sup> Department of the Army. DA PAM 672-1, Unit Citation and Campaign Participation Credit Register. Washington: Department of the Army, 6 July 1961.

<sup>8</sup> War Department, General Orders No. 18, 15 April 1943.

<sup>9</sup> John Wilson, CMH, Organizational History Branch, telephone interview by author, notes, Fort Riley, KS, 16 February 1993.

<sup>10</sup> Lineage and Honors Certificate for the 70th Engineer Battalion, 14 June 1994.

<sup>11</sup> CMH, Unit Record of Service, n.d., 70th Engineer Battalion file, CMH, Washington, D.C.

<sup>12</sup> Historical Section, Army War College (Cited hereafter as AWC), letter to The Adjutant General, ASF, the War Department, 28 October 1943, 70th Engineer Battalion file, CMH, Washington, D.C.

<sup>13</sup> Unit Record of Service.

<sup>14</sup> Unit Record of Service.

<sup>15</sup> CMH, Unit History Work Sheet, n.d., 70th Engineer Battalion file, CMH, Washington, D.C.

<sup>16</sup> Reference Barry W. Fowle, ed., Builders and Fighters: U.S. Army Engineers in World War II (Fort Belvoir: Office of History, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, 1992); Karl C. Dodd, The Corps of Engineers: The War Against Japan (Washington: Center for Military History, 1987); David A. Remley, Crooked Road: The Story of the Alaska Highway (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1976); Clarence L. Sturdevant, "The Military Road to Alaska: Organization and Administrative Problems," The Military Engineer, April 1943; Shelby A. McMillon, "The Strategic Route

to Alaska," The Military Engineer, November 1942; Albert L. Lane, "The Alcan Highway: Road Location and Construction Methods," The Military Engineer, October 1942.

<sup>17</sup> Barry W. Fowle, ed., Builders and Fighters: U.S. Army Engineers in World War II (Fort Belvoir: Office of History, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, 1992), 117-118.

<sup>18</sup> Karl C. Dodd, The Corps of Engineers: The War Against Japan (Washington: Center for Military History, 1987), 300.

<sup>19</sup> Fowle, Builders and Fighters, 119-122.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 122.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 122.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 122.

<sup>23</sup> Dodd, The War Against Japan, 314-315.

<sup>24</sup> Robert J. Greenwalt and Orville C. Hovey, "35th Engineer Combat Regiment Papers" photocopy, n.d., forward.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 10 August 1942 entry.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 18 August 1942 entry.

<sup>28</sup> Robert J. Greenwalt, interview by author, 11 November 1994.

<sup>29</sup> Greenwalt, interview by author, 27 January 1995.

<sup>30</sup> Greenwalt, interview by author, 11 November 1994.

<sup>31</sup> Greenwalt, interview by author, 27 January 1995.

<sup>32</sup> Greenwalt, interview by author, 11 November 1994.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> Greenwalt's son, Colonel Greenwalt, Corps of Engineers, US Army, was the commander of the 937th Engineer Group stationed at Fort Riley when the 70th Engineer Battalion was reactivated and its history published on post. Colonel Greenwalt notified his father, who contacted the reactivating battalion.

<sup>35</sup> Richard W. Smith and Roy A. Pelz, Shoulder Sleeve Insignia of the U.S. Army, 1946-1976 (Evansville, IN: University of Evansville Press, 1978), 3 and 18.

## CHAPTER 4

### THE HERITAGE OF THE 145th ENGINEER COMBAT BATTALION:

25 SEPTEMBER 1943 TO 29 JANUARY 1947

#### Heritage Provided by the System

The Statement of Service from the U.S. Army Center for Military History shows the 2nd Battalion, 35th Engineer Battalion reorganized and redesignated as the 145th Engineer Combat Battalion on 25 September 1943. The battalion inactivated on 8 January 1946 at Camp Patrick Henry, Virginia, and reverted to a "paper unit," remaining on the Army roles in name only. The 145th Battalion was redesignated as the 550th Engineer Combat Battalion on 30 January 1947 and was redesignated again on 15 March 1949 as the 70th Engineer Combat Battalion. Both of these redesignations were paper changes and did not effect a manned unit.

The Statement of Service also credited the battalion with campaign participation in Normandy, Northern France, Rhineland, Ardennes-Alsace, and Central Europe.<sup>1</sup> Once again though, very little history, and nothing about the property,<sup>2</sup> or customs and traditions, was provided by the Army system. There was no explanation or embellishment of unit campaigns, no reference to people, and no indication of mission. Fort Riley again had to reconstruct the heritage for this period of the battalion, putting the puzzle together from the same multiple sources, within and without the Army historical preservation system.

### Heritage Possessed but Not Proffered by the System

From within the system, the National Archives and Records Administration acknowledged possession of "about 1000 pages of information relating to the 145th Engineer Battalion for World War II."<sup>3</sup> The index to these records the National Archives forwarded to Fort Riley listed Operations Reports, General Orders, Photos, Messages, History, Journals, and several other reports and documents among the collection. The two jewels in the 145th Battalion files are the Unit History and the Unit Journal. Unfortunately, there is a significant difference between what the Archives say they have and the documents actually available. The National Archives index for the 145th material shows a Unit History spanning the period from 26 April 1944 to 21 June 1945, but a physical inspection only produced the period from 26 April to 27 October 1944. Likewise, two periods were listed for the Unit Journal, July to August 1944 and February to May 1945, but only the February to May 1945 document was available.

Several photographs, assumption of command orders, and other documents also exist in the Archives files. These, along with the Unit History, were previously compiled into a booklet by Colonel (Retired) Robert J. Greenwalt, a former member of the 35th Regiment and the 145th Battalion, and distributed to his former comrades. The majority of the information in the booklet originated from National Archive files and must receive appropriate credit; however, it is important to note that they first came into Fort Riley's possession from Greenwalt, a source external to the Archives.

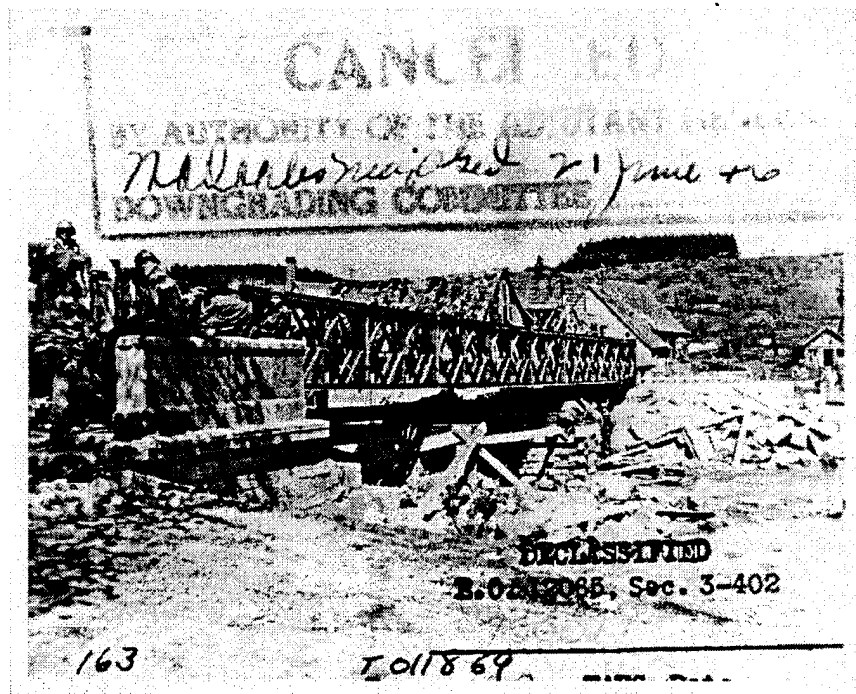


Figure 9. Bailey bridge constructed by Company B, 145th Engineer Battalion near Lehrberg, April 1945. Source: National Archives, Still Picture Branch, 145th Engineer Battalion files, Washington, D.C.

Greenwalt's booklet is built around the official Unit History for the period from 26 April to 27 October 1944, and contains personal photographs, papers, and memorabilia that are combined with official documents and photographs obtained from the Archives. There is a copy of 145th Engineer Combat Battalion General Orders Number 1, redesignating the battalion from the 2nd Battalion, 35th Regiment, activating the battalion, and redesignating the companies from D, E, and F, 35th Regiment, to Company A, B, and C, 145th Battalion. There are several handwritten situational reports, sent between company commanders and the Battalion Headquarters throughout the European campaign. There

are memos listing priorities of work for certain operations, and directives that restrict types of work and issue work sequencing guidance. Additional documents include a bridge reconnaissance report on the city of Nancy for the Commander of the 1137th Engineer Group and a battalion training schedule for a 3rd Army bridge school. There are several construction mission orders and a tentative plan for bridge construction in Saaralbe that include a list of required materials. The booklet contains an index to battalion operations orders from 23 December 1944 to 21 June 1945, listing the date, the subject, and the battalion Command Post Location with map coordinates. A separate list identifies the locations of battalion Command Posts by occupation date, town, and map coordinates from the battalion activation at Camp White, Oregon, on 25 September 1943 to the arrival in Landshut, Germany, on 4 May 1945. A battalion memorandum indicates an awards ceremony was held on 1 June 1945 at the Battalion Headquarters in Schonfeld, Germany, in which 16 battalion soldiers were honored. Life immediately after the war is also represented by a memo implementing a "Military Training Program" focusing on company level training of drill and ceremonies, military courtesy, and physical training. There is a memo directing companies to move to and participate in a floating bridge school at Hienheim on the west side of the Danube River from 2 to 4 July 1945. Also included in the booklet are several hand drawn cartoons, copies of an Allied safe conduct pass for surrendering German soldiers, an Allied propaganda leaflet, and over a dozen photographs portraying work the battalion accomplished.

The rapid postwar drawdown and individual rotation policy are also evident in the multiple Assumption of Command orders in the booklet. While no orders are present, there are indications that Lieutenant Colonel John F. McGaughey, the Battalion Commander for the deployment of the unit, was succeeded by Major Wyman P. Boynton, the Executive Officer, by the 31 May 1945 memo directing the 1 June battalion awards ceremony and by training schedules signed "By the order of Major Boynton." The first actual order shows Major James R. Fraser assuming command on 4 September 1945, followed by Captain Thomas C. O'Connell on 9 October, Captain James C. Cameron on 13 October, and Captain Leroy C. Stille, Jr., on 30 November. There is no indication if Captain Stille remained the Commander for the battalion's voyage back to the United States and inactivation at Camp Patrick Henry, Virginia, on 8 January 1946.

Other than the list of battalion Command Post locations, neither the Unit History, nor any of the other documents from the booklet or the National Archives addresses the period from 25 September 1943, when the battalion redesignated from 2nd Battalion, 35th Engineer Regiment at Camp White, Oregon, to the arrival of the 145th Battalion in Scotland on 26 April 1944. We only know from the list of locations, that the battalion Command Post was enroute to Camp Shank, New York on 10 April 1944, was established there on 15 April, and was on its way to Europe on 17 April 1944. When combined with the lack of detailed information available from all sources on the 35th Regiment after August 1942, a significant gap appears in the heritage of the battalion. Details on final year in the Northwest working on the ALCAN Highway, the



return to the U.S. in September 1943, the redesignation to the 145th Battalion, and the training, preparations and movement of the battalion across the U.S. and the Atlantic Ocean to Scotland appear lost.

The Unit History, found in the National Archives and Greenwalt's booklet, begins on 26 April 1944 with the 145th Battalion arriving in Gurock, Scotland, after an eight day trip across the Atlantic on board the liner *New Amsterdam*.<sup>4</sup> The battalion moved by train to a camp at Dunham New Park, Altrincham, Cheshire, England, for training and preparation for the European invasion and was assigned to 3rd Army, but attached to VIII Corps for administration. It was further attached to the 1102nd Engineer Combat Group and immediately put on alert status to procure necessary supplies and equipment, since the battalion had arrived in England with little administrative equipment.

Lieutenant Colonel John F. McGaughey was the Battalion Commander, and Major Wyman P. Boynton was the Executive Officer. The primary staff officers were: Second Lieutenant Edgar F. Sanborn, Jr., Adjutant/S-1; First Lieutenant James R. Donaldson, Intelligence Officer/S-2; Major William G. Burnett, Jr., Operations Officer/S-3; and Captain Vernon E. Whitehouse, Supply Officer/S-4. Headquarters and Service Company was commanded by Captain Walter J. Crowley, Company A by First Lieutenant Herbert H. Howard, Company B by Captain Robert J. Greenwalt, Company C by First Lieutenant Darrel B. Bishop, and the Medical Detachment by Captain Morris Peterson. Many of the officers and men of the battalion had been together since the 35th Regiment originally formed and worked on the ALCAN Highway project.

Time in England was spent training for the upcoming invasion operation. Special emphasis was placed on Bailey Bridge construction, demolition, and reconnaissance. Specialists of the battalion also focused on battle casualty reporting, tactics, equipment, and uniforms of the German Army, waterproofing of vehicles and equipment, and water purification. All officers attended an artillery forward observer course conducted by the 771st Field Artillery, to hone their indirect fire request and control skills. During demolition training on 1 June 1944, the battalion suffered its first casualties in Europe. A British type instantaneous fuse was mistakenly used instead of American time fuse, with the resulting explosion seriously injuring five soldiers from Company B. Major Boynton was replaced by Major Burnett as Executive Officer when Boynton was hospitalized on 12 June 1944. Captain William N. Lucke transferred from the 1102nd Engineer Group to fill the resultant vacancy in the S-3 position. While in England, the battalion reported a strength of 32 officers, 632 enlisted and 126 vehicles.

Once the battalion completed its training and procured 95 percent of the supplies and equipment required, it received a movement notice on 18 June 1944 and departed the next day. The destination was Camp Brymore, near Cannington, in Somersetshire, where the unit bivouacked, waterproofed vehicles, and prepared for transport. Final preparations were completed on 3 July 1944 and the battalion moved to the marshaling area near Bridgeport, England, where final briefings were held and clothing and rations were issued. On 5 July, the battalion advance party with 31 soldiers and commanded by First Lieutenant Raymond J. Burle, departed with some of the heavy equipment for Waymouth,

England, the port of embarkation. The rest of the battalion followed on 6 July and began loading onto two LSTs at 2300 hours. The ships sailed at 0600 on 7 July, crossed the English Channel, and arrived at Utah beach later that evening. Both ships were run aground during the night's hightide and the battalion was able to offload onto the beach soon after sunrise.

The first bivouac of the battalion in France was one mile northeast of Picauville, where the unit consolidated and waited instructions. The first combat casualties of the battalion occurred here, when Corporal Jesus Medina, from Company C, was "shot by a sniper while on guard" and suffered a severe leg wound. Another Company C soldier was evacuated for combat exhaustion. Once operational on 10 July, the battalion, still attached to VIII Corps and the 1102nd Engineer Combat Group, was committed to support the 8th Infantry Division. It moved to a bivouac site two miles south of Pont L'Abbe and began work on 11 July. Company C was detached, moved to a new site one and one half miles northeast of La Haye du Puits, then moved into the town to work clearing rubble and removing mines. The Company was "under fire from 88 shells each night" while in this area. Company B moved out on 12 July to the Northeast of La Potoria and it, along with the other line companies, performed combat engineering tasks in the forward areas. Primary missions were "removing mine fields, digging artillery emplacements, road repair, and engineer reconnaissance." The communications section kept busy throughout the Normandy campaign, stringing telephone wire from the battalion to the companies, and sometimes to the group. "Continual maintenance and repair was necessary

to repair breaks caused by traffic and shell fire." The battalion captured its first prisoners on 14 July, when "two German officers, attempting to infiltrate through our lines after the defeat of their unit at Cherbourg, surrendered to members of Company B."<sup>5</sup>

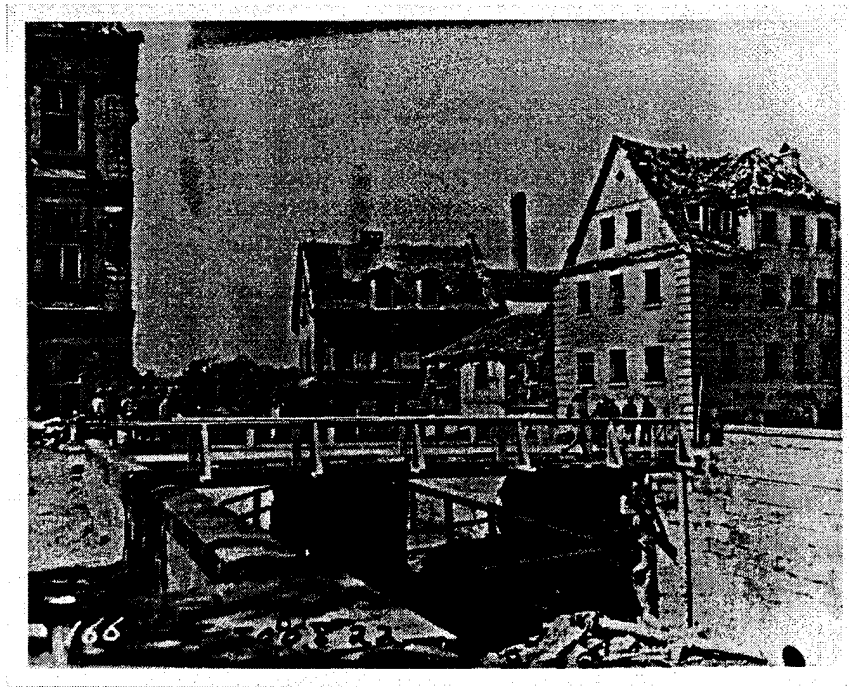


Figure 10. Fixed bridge constructed by Company B, 145th Engineer Battalion near Ansbach, Germany, April 1945. Source: National Archives, Still Picture Branch, 145th Engineer Battalion files, Washington, D.C.

On 16 July, the battalion was placed in support of the 83rd Infantry Division near Carentan and the companies bivouacked northwest of La Mare Des Pierres. Company A immediately received the mission of emplacing a hasty minefield near the front. They began work at 0200 on 17 July and finally finished the next day at 1700. Enemy mortar and

artillery fire harassed the company throughout the mission. The remaining companies repaired roads, cleared minefields, and buried livestock killed during the fighting. Three more soldiers were wounded between 20 and 30 July. One from shrapnel "while working in [the] gravel quarry at Lithaire," one when he "stepped on a German mustard pot mine," and the third from the explosion of a teller mine.

The battalion received notification on 20 July that it should ready itself, to move as infantry, into the front lines between the 83rd and 90th Divisions and plug a gap in the line. Engineer work ceased until 26 July when the alert was canceled. Engineer work resumed with the primary effort focused on the "important supply road between Carentan and Periers." Company C received the first bridge construction mission for the battalion on 28 July. They emplaced a Class 40 Bailey Bridge,<sup>6</sup> 50 feet long, then constructed a 36-foot timber trestle bridge<sup>7</sup> on 29 and 30 July.<sup>8</sup>

After the Allied breakout from Normandy, the battalion focus shifted forward. The rear work line became the St. Lo-Periers road. Company C was attached to the 1102nd Group Headquarters on 31 July and moved to emplace a Class 40 Bailey Bridge at Ponts. The Bailey replaced the previously destroyed permanent bridge and was completed on 1 August. The rest of the battalion moved to La Jourdanriere during the night of 31 July and focused on clearing debris and repairing roads, particularly through Avranches. Company C assisted the Avranches clearing and reinforced the Ponts bridge to Class 70. On 2 August the battalion moved to bivouac near St. Jean de la Haye, north of the river from Avranches. Major Boynton returned from the hospital and resumed

his duties as Executive Officer and Major Burnett returned to the S-3 section. German planes strafed and bombed the area later that night, trying to hit the Bailey Bridges on the main supply road in Avranches and dropping bombs within 50 yards of the battalion. A direct hit on the battalion's La See River water point slightly wounded one member of the S-4 section and the battalion medical detachment spent the night helping members of the 304th Engineer Battalion that suffered heavier casualties.

Lieutenant Colonel McGaughey ordered a move to new bivouac locations, dispersing the battalion in order to avoid the potential target area. The new locations, sited away from main road junctions and bridges, were less likely targets. Unfortunately, German planes still managed to spot and strafe Company C and Headquarters and Service Company as they entered their new bivouac site. One soldier was wounded by shrapnel and the remaining personnel received orders to "dig in" before setting up the area.

The battalion was relieved from the Avranches mission on 4 August 1944 and it moved forward, following advancing American forces. Company A moved to Sons de Bretagne to begin work on a 110-foot, Double-Single Bailey Bridge, in the town of Rennes on the following day. A battalion advance party consisting of a 24 man security detachment from Company C and a water point crew from the S-4 section also left for Romazy. The rest of the battalion followed on 5 August and dispatched reconnaissance parties once camp was established. Company A built a Class 70, Double-Double Bailey in Rennes on 6 August, while the rest of the battalion went to work clearing and repairing roads, many supporting

8th Infantry Division operations. "Reconnaissance of roads west of Rennes was continuous." The battalion relocated on 7 August, to a site two miles northwest of Betton. Company A constructed yet another bridge in Rennes on the 7th, while Company C constructed a 100-foot, Class 40 Bailey and Company B "spent two days destroying German ammunition in a former German bivouac."

On 8 August, the battalion priority shifted to the Rennes-Vannes road, where it spent the next three days repairing and clearing the road and conducting reconnaissance of the area. Company C built a 50-foot, Class 70 Bailey on 9 August, while Company A emplaced a 30-foot, Class 70 on the 11th, and Company C "repaired a stone arch bridge in Montfort." At Auray, near Vannes, reconnaissance teams discovered a large German engineer supply dump on 10 August and Company B was dispatched to conduct the inventory, a process that took the next three days.

The battalion lost two soldiers during this period. The first, from the 628th Light Equipment Company, attached to the 145th Battalion, died when another soldier accidentally fired a captured German Luger pistol. An accidental discharge of a M-1 rifle in the bivouac area killed the second, PFC Surey, from Company C, on 12 August. Not all was gloom, however. On the lighter side, the battalion "liberated" a German mobile shower unit in the Rennes area that made hot showers available "whenever the unit went into bivouac."

On 17 August 1944, the 145th Battalion reverted to 3rd Army control and was temporarily attached to the 1134th Engineer Combat Group, then the 1137th Group commanded by Lieutenant Colonel George

Morris. The battalion moved immediately to Le Mans, then on to Sevigne L'Eveque, arriving on 18 August. The priority was to replace temporary Bailey Bridges with more permanent structures so the Bailey sets could be moved forward and used again. Company B worked from 20 to 27 August, replacing Bailey bridges with a "stone arch bridge across the Mayenne River in Laval." Companies A and C hauled Bailey bridge and engineer materials to forward engineer supply depots from 20 to 25 August. On 26 August, their focus shifted to reinforcing and constructing timber trestle bridges at Souppes and Nargis, then dismantling a 120-foot Bailey in Nargis. The Bailey was hauled to a bridge park at Sommesous by Company A, assisted by Company B upon their return from Laval. The two companies had just completed deliveries on 29 August when the entire battalion stalled due to a fuel shortage.

The four companies moved separately over the next two days as fuel became available. They reunited on 1 September near the "former German garrison of Mailly-le-Camp." Reconnaissance teams departed immediately to Chalons and Vitry-le-Francois on the Marne River, and on 2 September Companies A and B moved to Chalons, where Company A replaced a Bailey bridge with a timber trestle. Company B worked on a timber trestle across the Marne "to replace a large concrete structure demolished by the Germans." Company C moved to Vitry-le-Francois, strengthened three Class 70 bridges, then built two Class 70 timber trestle bridges. Headquarters and Service Company meanwhile moved to Lerouville on the Meuse River to prepare for the next projects at St. Mihiel and Commercy. Companies A and B joined the battalion on 6 September, Company C three days later. Company C also reported a



reconnaissance team, dispatched on 4 September, as missing in action with four soldiers lost.

The battalion resumed familiar work here, placing new bridge flooring and constructing timber trestle bridges, clearing and repairing roads, and moving bridging materials for the anticipated assault on the city of Nancy. Battalion efforts centered in an "area east of Bar-le-Duc, extending to, and including the Meuse River between St. Mihiel and Pagny." On 10 September the battalion turned over "all assault boats, six ton Floats, and reconnaissance boats" to the Bridge Depot for use in the crossing of the Moselle River.

Rest and relaxation finally caught up with the battalion on 13 September, when Bing Crosby and the rest of a visiting USO show entertained a third of the unit in Commercy. With the 15th, came a Red Cross "Clubmobile" and coffee and donuts. Bob Evans and his USO group visited the battalion on 22 September.

Tensions and planning increased as the liberation of Nancy approached. The 145th Battalion mission would again focus on clearing roads, and constructing and reconstructing bridges. Reconnaissance teams traveled daily to Toul, then "north and south along the Moselle River from that point." On 16 September, the battalion entered the captured city with the intent of bivouacking in a large park in the city center. Heavy German artillery fire into the city forced the unit to a safer location six miles to the West, and work began in earnest the following day.

Colder weather and increased security enticed the unit to begin moving into buildings on 28 September. The Battalion Headquarters,

along with the Headquarters and Service Company moved into the Brabois Chateau southwest of Nancy. The surrounding woods "were heavily mined and booby trapped" and one soldier died instantly as he detonated a mine while trying to clear a road. Over 250 mines, including tellermines, light panzer mines, shaped charges and bangalores, and 150 booby traps were cleared over the next 30 days. Companies A and C initially moved into Remicourt, but Company A joined Company B a few days later in Renemont, Jarville, and Company C moved to Laneuveville. A squad truck from Company C hit a tellermine near Nancy, wounding 11 soldiers, while one of the Company officers broke a leg while "loading bridge material." Over the next month, the 145th Battalion constructed ten major bridges, eight timber trestle bridges totaling 854 feet, one steel stringer bridge of 12 feet, and one Bailey bridge of 253 feet. Additionally, the battalion conducted minesweeping operations on roads and bivouac areas and worked to clear, clean, and repair buildings in Nancy for occupation by Third Army Headquarters. Heating, electrical, and plumbing systems were repaired, "thousands of panes of glass" were replaced, and debris was removed. Third Army Headquarters Commandant commended the battalion on the work. Soldiers of the 145th became the first graduates of the Third Army bridge school run by the 88th Engineer Heavy Pontoon Battalion at Toul. The final entry in the Unit History document, stated the line companies built floating Bailey bridges from 25 to 27 October and 40 soldiers participated in an outboard motor course.

A very stark hole appears here in the battalion heritage, as the information available from the National Archives skips the next three months and some of the fiercest combat on the World War II Western

front. The battalion, as part of the 3rd Army, may have played a key role in the "Battle of the Bulge," one of the pivotal and decisive periods of combat in the war, but the heritage preservation system of the Army failed to preserve any significant details of the battalion during this important event. One undated and unsigned, handwritten note in the file indicates that the battalion was assigned to III Corps on 20 December 1944, putting the battalion even closer to these pivotal events. Since no information is available from the system on the actions of the 145th Battalion during this period, one must look for clues of battalion activities elsewhere. Clues on battalion activities during this missing period are covered later in this chapter.

The second jewel of the Archives, the original Unit Journal, is a tremendous source of detailed, daily information on the 145th Battalion. Once again, the National Archives index shows two periods of the Unit Journal on hand, July to August 1944 and February to May 1945. Unfortunately, the Journal for the period from 1 February 1945 to 9 May 1945, is all that has apparently survived. On 1 February 1945 the battalion was located in Erpeldange Le Wiltz, Luxembourg, having arrived there on 28 January, still attached to the 1137th Group.<sup>9</sup> The battalion was supporting the 249th Engineer Battalion, that was in turn, supporting the 17th Airborne Division. The Journal includes many of the details omitted in the previous Unit History, which seems to have summarized general activities and major events. Company A, for example, spent the 1st day of February removing snow and ice from roads, sanding roads, constructing gun emplacements for the 179th Field Artillery, constructing a 23-foot, timber trestle bridge, and undergoing "special

infantry training" for one platoon. Company B was constructing a 48-foot, timber trestle bridge at Clervaux, constructing a fixed bridge at Enscherange, operating a "training site and range," and operating "sand pit #2." Company C was also clearing and sanding roads, securing the water point at Arsdorf, operating sand pit #1, constructing a 48-foot, timber trestle bridge in Wiltz, and sweeping and destroying mines in the town of Erpeldange.

Life in the battalion had developed into a relative routine by this time. Companies generally worked on their own in specified areas or on specific missions, satelliting around the general vicinity of the Battalion Headquarters. The missions were numerous and varied: snow removal and maintenance of roads, clearing debris from roads and streets of towns, operating quarries and sand pits, stock piling sand and sanding roads when required, constructing timber trestle bridges to replace Bailey bridges, transporting bridging and construction materials, hauling munitions, burying dead livestock, demolition of ice jams threatening bridges, digging artillery emplacements, mine clearing operations (both German and American), collecting ammunition and fuel cans from the battlefields, guarding of bridges and engineer supply sites, engineer reconnaissance, and of course training and weapons firing. All was not work, however. Movies were intermittently available and soldiers rotated in small groups to safe rest camps in the rear area while others enjoyed passes to Paris. A lucky few even returned to the United States for "Rest and Recuperation furlough."

On 5 February the battalion received orders placing them in support of the 6th Cavalry Group, consisting of the 6th and 28th Cavalry

Squadrons. Tasks continued as before, except the unit was to be ready to assemble on two hours notice. The work area was modified with a new southern boundary of Fuelen-Ettlebruck-Diekirk, and an eastern boundary being a "road running parallel to Hoschied." On 6 February the Battalion Headquarters moved to Niederfeulen, near Michelau, and Major Boynton assumed command of the battalion the following day when Lieutenant Colonel McGaughey was evacuated to the hospital for unspecified reasons. That same day Company C received the mission to construct a Bailey bridge for the 6th Cavalry Group's, 1255th Engineer Battalion at Vianden. The 1255th mission was to attack as infantry and capture the town the following day, 8 February. Company C, 145th would move forward and emplace the bridge once the town was cleared and the ridge line on the far side of the town was secured, but the operation never materialized and was canceled later that day.

The battalion sat through a training film shown by III Corps Special Service Office, entitled "Your Job in Germany," on the 10th, but otherwise continued their normal mission support. On 12 February, the 1137th Group was attached to VIII Corps from III Corps. The 145th remained attached to the 1137th Group and in support of the 6th Cavalry Group. Company C lost another soldier seriously wounded when he stepped on a German Schu mine on 14 February. The same day the battalion delivered assault boats to the 6th Armored Division and checked a downed P-47 Thunderbolt for booby traps prior to Army Air Forces evacuating the plane. On 17 February, the battalion received road maintenance assistance in the form of 55 Luxembourg civilians, hired by the Luxembourg government for pay and one meal with the 145th.

One platoon from Company A constructed a 108-foot floating treadway bridge across the Our River, north of Vianden, in support of 6th Cavalry Group offensive operations on 19 February and the expansion of an existing bridgehead. The company spent the next three days constructing and maintaining the approaches to the bridge. Company C constructed a 130-foot, Double-Single Bailey bridge across the Our River in Vianden on 21 February and suffered one soldier "slightly injured in action . . . and dropped from assignment" on the following day. On 23 February, Company A emplaced a 140-foot, Class 40, Double-Single Bailey and Company C followed with a 200-foot, Double-Single Bailey across the Our River on the 24th. Company B appears to have been the first unit of the battalion to have crossed into Germany, moving into Neuerburg on 25 February. The battalion Command Post, Headquarters and Service Company, and the Medical Detachment soon followed, establishing a bivouac at Koxhausen. All units were officially "reminded of the regulations regarding fraternization and necessity of alertness and watchfulness." Company A moved to Berscheid, Germany, on the 26th, and Company C finally left Luxembourg on 1 March 1945, moving to Lauperath, Germany.

The 28th of February brought with it a change of attachment orders for the battalion from Third Army. The 145th detached from the 1137th Engineer Group and attached to the 1123rd, commanded by Colonel Donald Elliget. Missions and areas of responsibility remained the same. The 1st Platoon of Company B constructed a 100-foot Triple-Single Bailey bridge at Waxweiler on the 28th, a routine occurrence except for the incoming German artillery that hindered the work and wounded two soldiers, one of whom required evacuation. The remaining units of the

battalion maintained work on the same type missions they had come to know so well. The entry for 28 February also contained the first reference to replacements in the Journal; nine soldiers from a 29 January requisition.

The Battalion Headquarters moved to Rinhuscheid, Germany, on 2 March and received new mission instructions from Third Army on 4 March. The battalion would remain attached to 1123rd Group, but was replaced by the 44th Battalion of the 1123rd Group in supporting VIII Corps. The 145th reverted to an Army support role and the Headquarters left for Gouvvy, Belgium that morning. Company A moved to Huldnage, Luxembourg, while Company B joined the battalion in Gouvvy and Company C moved into Sterpigny, Belgium. Battalion Headquarters moved again the next day, this time to Beiler, Luxembourg. Companies also repositioned during the following day.

On 7 March, the new work area for the battalion included the roads from St. Vith to Steinebruck, St. Vith to Stez, and Oudler to Staffenshausen. The battalion also received a letter of commendation from the Commander of the 1137th Engineer Group, Colonel George A. Morris, with several accolades worthy of note:

[The] Battalion played a vital part in giving direct support to an Infantry Division in the reduction of the so-called Bastogne Bulge.

By reason of the splendid work of your battalion, no main supply routes were closed at any time.

Beginning about 15 February 1945, your battalion, reinforcing a Cavalry Group, engaged in assaulting and reducing the main German fortifications along the German Border, carrying out all assigned tasks in an excellent manner and was well forward in the division area of operation to construct bridges and open up routes of communication.<sup>10</sup>

Additional roads were added to the battalion mission list on 9 March. St. Vith to Pronefeld and from the St. Vith-Pronefeld road to Neu Uttfeld. On 12 March, the assistant S-2 and his driver conducted a reconnaissance mission that extended a bit outside the battalion operational area. The two had gone as far as the Rhine River, arriving in Andernach on 10 March and Koblenz on 12 March. Movement back into Germany began with the Company A move to Pronefeld on 8 March, followed by Company C moving to Lauperath on 13 March and the Battalion Headquarters moving to Schonechen on 14 March. Company B remained in Gouvy.

Tensions began to rise on 14 March, when the S-2 and assistant S-2 left to look for possible float bridge sites near Kobern and Winninger on the Moselle River. On 15 March, Major Boynton, still Commanding the battalion, also left with the S-3 and Company A Commander on a reconnaissance for a possible VIII Corps bridge site on the Moselle River. The assistant S-2 returned on the 15th with pictures of an arch bridge still standing, and spanning the Moselle at Koblenz. He reported that German snipers on the far bank had fired at the officers while they had conducted their recon, that the S-2 had remained in the area to look for possible fixed bridge sites, and that a floating Bailey was feasible at Winninger. Major Boynton returned to the battalion on 17 March and preparations for the mission began the next day, with all companies alerted for movement.

All companies conducted gas mask drills in accordance with 3rd Army orders and on 19 March left their bivouac areas at 0400 for Winniger, carrying bridging material on their vehicles. Work began at



0800 with Company C starting from the near bank, Company A from the far bank, and Company B in the middle. A lack of unspecified parts delayed completion of the bridge, but it was finished on 20 March and the final bridge totaled 456 feet. Tired soldiers returned to bivouac areas only to find that the entire 1123rd Group had been attached to XII Corps and movement was probable. The final word came at 0100 the next morning and the battalion departed for Wahlbach soon after. The next day, the battalion received another message relieving them from the 1123rd Group and attaching them to the 1135th. Once again the battalion loaded up and moved to Woorstadt and the 1135th.

Upon arrival at Woorstadt, mission details were disclosed and the operation commenced on 23 March. Company C was temporarily attached to the 1134th Group, then the 2nd Naval Unit, and assisted the 5th Infantry Division in assault operations across the Rhine River. The Company worked with the 2nd Naval Unit to beach landing craft carrying troops and equipment across the river. Company A was attached to the 88th Heavy Pontoon Battalion and assisted in the construction of a 1200-foot long, heavy pontoon bridge across the Rhine at Nierstein, Germany. Company B remained in reserve. On 24 March Company A worked with the 88th Battalion to emplace and guard a pontoon bridge across the Rhine at Oppenheim, while Company B constructed a 1600-foot long anti-mine boom across the Rhine at Oppenheim and Company C continued operations with the 2nd Naval Unit. On 25 March, orders arrived detaching the battalion from the 1134th and reattaching it to the 1123rd Group, but operations continued as before. On 26 March the battalion moved the Headquarters into Oppenheim and Companies A and B turned their efforts towards bridge

maintenance. The battalion also attached 40 motor boat operators to the 249th Engineer Battalion to assist their crossing at Mainz. All three companies began focusing on bridge maintenance on 27 March and all received "stimulating Tetanus shots" from the battalion Medical Detachment. On 30 March, the battalion held formation in Oppenheim, where Major Boynton presented the Bronze Star Medal to two Medical Detachment personnel, Tec 3 Adolph J. Janus and Tec 4 George S. Skalicky, "for heroic achievement in treating and evacuating the wounded during a bombing raid at Avranches, France, 2-3 August 1944." On 31 March, 41 replacements arrived, bringing the battalion strength up to 581.

By 1 April, the war had all indications of drawing to a close and peacetime routines began appearing. The battalion held a retreat ceremony on the 1st, then purchased a movie projector with unit funds on the 2nd, ensuring movies three times a week thereafter. The 1123rd Group organized a softball tournament to determine the Group championship and the battalion instituted an engineer training program for all of the new replacements. Topics included mines and booby traps, use of engineer tools, engineer organization, and bridges. Companies occasionally relocated to different towns in the area, but the main focus for battalion operations continued to be maintenance of the bridges across the Rhine. On 5 April, officers from the Battalion Headquarters assembled and held a Special Courts Martial for a soldier from the 1123rd Group, and later that day a "Red Cross Clubmobile (3 Red Cross girls) toured the battalion and bridge site to serve coffee and doughnuts to the troops."

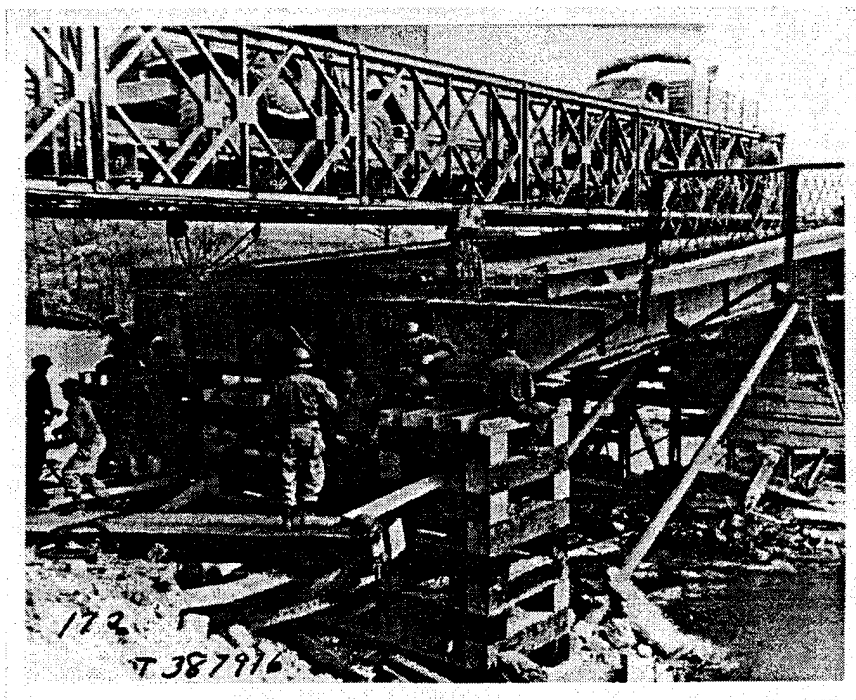


Figure 11. Bailey bridge constructed by Company A, 145th Engineer Battalion near Reichelsdorf, April 1945. Source: National Archives, Still Picture Branch, 145th Engineer Battalion files, Washington, D.C.

Missions expanded slightly on 6 April, when the battalion received orders reaffirming attachment to the 1123rd Group and to support XII Corps in the area from Dunheim, Germany, along the Rhine River to Mainz, Germany. For the first time, depth charges were dropped into the river to counter any underwater sabotage attempts, pot hole repairs were directed to be "of a permanent nature," and "carefully supervised civilians" were used to clear and remove debris and floating objects from the river and banks. The battalion was detached from XII Corps on 7 April and reverted back to Third Army control with no change in mission. An accidental gunshot wounded another soldier on 8 April, and soldiers of the battalion received Bronze Stars for their Northern

France, Normandy, and Germany campaign ribbons the next day. The 1123rd Group established a rest camp in Esch, Luxembourg, for all Group units on 13 April, for which the 145th Battalion received a twice weekly quota of one officer and 28 enlisted men.

Peacetime appeared even closer by 15 April, when the battalion saw the training film entitled "Sex, Morality, and Venereal Disease." The S-2, Captain James R. Donaldson, was presented the Bronze Star medal on 16 April for meritorious service and efforts began to dismantle selected floating bridges across the Rhine. On 18 April, the battalion received verbal orders to turn over the Rhine area mission to the 249th Engineer Battalion and move to Wernick, Germany, and assume a new work area. The new area was bounded on the North by Hammsburg, west by Stattin, southwest by Wurzburg, south by Kitzengen, and east by the Main River. The battalion remained attached to the 1123rd Group, but would now perform road and bridge maintenance in support of III Corps. Movement began the next morning with the battalion command post setting up in Zeuzleben, initially, then moving to Repperndorf on the 21st.

Duty again settled into a routine, with the primary missions being road clearance, bridge construction, and hauling of materials. Occasional interruptions punctuated the routine. On 23 April, unknown assailants shot two soldiers from Company B while guarding a steel dump at Crawinkel. One died immediately and the other was seriously wounded and evacuated. On 26 April, surrendering German soldiers joined the routine, when ten gave themselves up as battalion elements entered the town of Allersberg. Refugees in Allersberg informed the Commander of Company B of an additional soldier, who was soon captured.

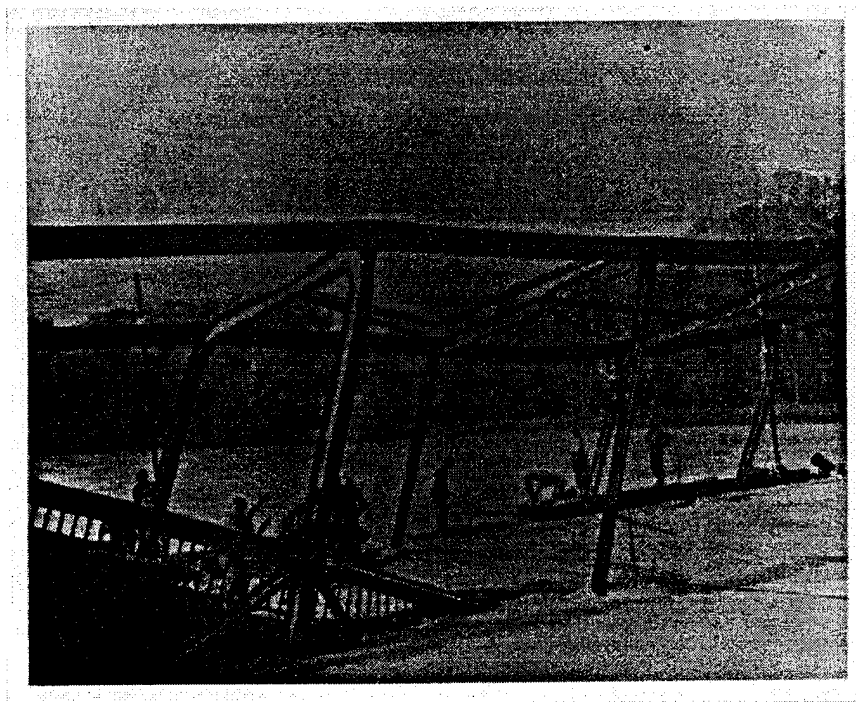


Figure 12. Company B, 145th Engineer Battalion clearing debris from a demolished bridge on the Isar River, near Moosburg, Germany, May 1945. Source: National Archives, Still Picture Branch, 145th Engineer Battalion files, Washington, D.C.

The steady stream of surrendering Germans initiated a call from the 1123rd Group on 29 April, directing a battalion reconnaissance of an Allied prisoner of war camp at Moosburg. The mission was to "investigate and report on sewage, water storage facilities, water source and estimation of work required." The assessment completed, the battalion next established a water point to service the camp and Company A began work to improve facilities and utilities on 1 May. Battalion Headquarters moved to Kipfenberg later that day, then moved to Landshut on 4 May. The 6th saw the arrival of an additional 28 replacements and

the S-2 section began looking for a potential prisoner of war facility in the area from Nurnberg to the Czechoslovakian border on 8 May. The final entry in the Journal is: "Peace declared and hostilities ceased in Europe as of 0001 hours. The war in Europe has ended."

As a whole, the documents from the National Archive files provide an excellent source of historical information on the activities of the 145th Battalion. Two particular documents paint a superb picture of battalion activities. The Unit History, covering the period from the battalion arrival in Scotland on 26 April 1944 to the Saarland fighting at the end of October, and the Unit Journal, covering the period from the Third Army arrival at the Our River and Siegfried Line on 1 February 1945, to the end of the war on 8 May, are the richest information source for this period of the battalions existence. They are substantial finds by themselves, but they also raise additional questions and show system failures. First, there is the obvious hole in the coverage between 31 October 1944 and 31 January 1945, encompassing a period that potentially contains the greatest and most significant events in the battalion history during World War II. All information between the battalion redesignation at Camp White, Oregon, on 25 September 1943 and its arrival in Scotland on 26 April 1944, is completely missing. Also missing are details covering the period from the end of the war on 8 May until the battalion inactivation at Camp Patrick Henry, Virginia, on 8 January 1946. One must also wonder what happened to the Unit Journal for the period covered by the Unit History, and the Unit History for the period of the Unit Journal, since the combination of the two would provide a valuable cross check and different perspective.

The remaining institutions of the system provided little additional information, except for the CMH unit files. The Still Pictures Branch of the National Archives yielded no photographs.<sup>11</sup> The Archives Branch of the U.S. Army Military History Institute at Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania, an unofficial component of the system, failed to identify any holdings on the 145th Battalion,<sup>12</sup> however, the Special Collections Branch did uncover one photograph.<sup>13</sup>

The last information from the system came from the physical review of the CMH records, conducted in conjunction with this thesis, two years after the initial efforts to reactivate the battalion. This record review again confirmed the Army possessed additional historical information not provided to the reactivating unit and it yielded additional historical detail, particularly valuable for those periods not covered by the National Archives documents and invaluable leads for reconstruction research.

The 2nd Battalion, 35th Engineer Regiment was redesignated and reorganized as the 145th Engineer Combat Battalion on 25 September 1943 while at Camp White, Oregon, near the city of Medford. The redesignation occurred less than two months after the battalion returned from assignment on the ALCAN Highway and the newly redesignated unit was assigned to Fourth Army effective 5 November 1943. On 11 October 1943, the battalion reorganized to comply with the 1943 version of Table of Organization and Equipment 5-15, and effective 15 January 1944, the battalion was assigned to III Corps. The unit received orders dated 9 March 1944, ordering it to "New York or Boston Port of Embarkation enroute to permanent overseas station."<sup>14</sup> The advance detachment

arrived at Fort Hamilton, New York, on 20 March 1944, reported to the New York Port of Embarkation on 23 March, and departed the same day on Ship #2966-B, the *John Erricsson*. The detachment arrived in England on 9 April 1944. The main body of the battalion departed Camp White on 10 April 1944 and arrived at Camp Shanks, New York, on 15 April for staging operations. It reported to the New York Port of Embarkation on 18 April, departed on 27 April, and arrived in England on 27 April 1944. The battalion remained in England until 6 July 1944, when it transferred to France, arriving on 8 July. Departing France on 22 July 1944, the battalion moved back and forth between Luxembourg and Belgium until 25 February 1945, when it entered Germany for the first time. The unit reorganized under the 1944 Table of Organization and Equipment 5-15, effective 15 December 1944, while in Luxembourg. It remained in Germany until 4 March 1945, when it was assigned to the Third Army and moved back through Belgium to Luxembourg, where it remained from 5 to 14 March 1945. It then returned to Germany until 27 November 1945, when it departed for France, arriving on 29 November. The battalion staged for redeployment until 22 December, when it boarded the *SS James Fannin*, Ship #RE7447-C, at Marseilles, France, on 22 December 1945. The ship sailed two days later and arrived in the U.S. in early January 1946. On 8 January 1946, the 145th Engineer Combat Battalion inactivated at Camp Patrick Henry, Virginia.<sup>15</sup>

The CMH files also contained the General Order numbers and dates for each of the campaign participation credits listed in the Statement of Service and a copy of the order redesignating the unmanned battalion as the 550th Engineer Combat Battalion.<sup>16</sup> Another



redesignation occurred on 15 March 1949, in a Department of the Army letter that assigned the battalion the new designation of the 70th Engineer Combat Battalion. The letter also assigned the unit to the European Command and directed the unit "be activated and organized . . . at the earliest practicable date."<sup>17</sup> No explanations were given for the redesignations.

#### Heritage Found Outside the System

##### Published External Sources

Expanding the search outside of the official preservation system of the Army, one will rarely, if ever, find additional references to the 145th Engineer Battalion in other publications. World War II order of battle books identify them, but they rarely appear elsewhere, if at all.<sup>18</sup> One can assume that the battalion successfully did what it was supposed to do, but did not distinguish itself enough to bring it exceptional, nor long lasting recognition or notoriety. Fortunately, knowing something of the chain of command and task organization, one can use publications focusing on higher headquarters organizations to find clues of 145th Battalion activities. This is especially important and valuable when trying to fill the information hole in National Archive documents for the period from 31 October 1944 to 31 January 1945 and the Battle of the Bulge.

Patton's Third Army: A Daily Combat Diary, provides a daily condensation of Third Army activities for this period and clues of 145th Battalion activities.<sup>19</sup> The Third, forced to suspend major offensive operations in October due to a critical shortage of supplies, returned

to the offensive in November, capturing the city of Metz on 20 November 1944. Extreme cold weather and flooding combined to cause a large trench foot problem for American forces, but by the end of the month the lead elements of Third Army had advanced into the German homeland. The Third continued offensive operations toward the Siegfried Line through the first half of December, when the Germans launched their offensive into the Ardennes forest and the First Army on the northern flank on 16 December 1944.

On the day of the attack, the Germans remained on the defensive along the Third Army front, while the Third Army improved bridgeheads established at Saarlautern and Ensdorf on the Saar River, continued advancing to the northeast and feverishly worked on contingency plans to support the First Army. On 17 December, an unspecified Third Army unit began using an experimental truck-mounted magnet to sweep highways of shrapnel. "In one 5-mile stretch, a total of 125 pounds of shrapnel was removed from a road."

On 18 December 1944, General Patton, Third Army Commander, issued verbal orders that resulted in III Corps, with the 26th Infantry, 80th Infantry, and 4th Armored Divisions, passing control of its zone to XX Corps and consolidating in the vicinity of Luxembourg and Arlon. Engineer units, then responsible for supplying maps, focused on printing and distributing maps for the area north of the old Third Army zone, to three corps and thirteen divisional units. Engineers "began a study of major roads and bridges in Belgium, Luxembourg, and Germany" on 20 December, the same day Third Army published written orders for the upcoming operation with specific instructions for III Corps.

Third U.S. Army will change direction and will attack to the north from the area of Luxembourg to Arlon to destroy the enemy on its front and be prepared to change direction to the northeast and seize crossings of the Rhine River.

The III Corps will attack north in One on Army order in the direction of St. Vith and destroy the enemy on its front . . .  
III Corps will attack on December 21 . . . .<sup>20</sup>

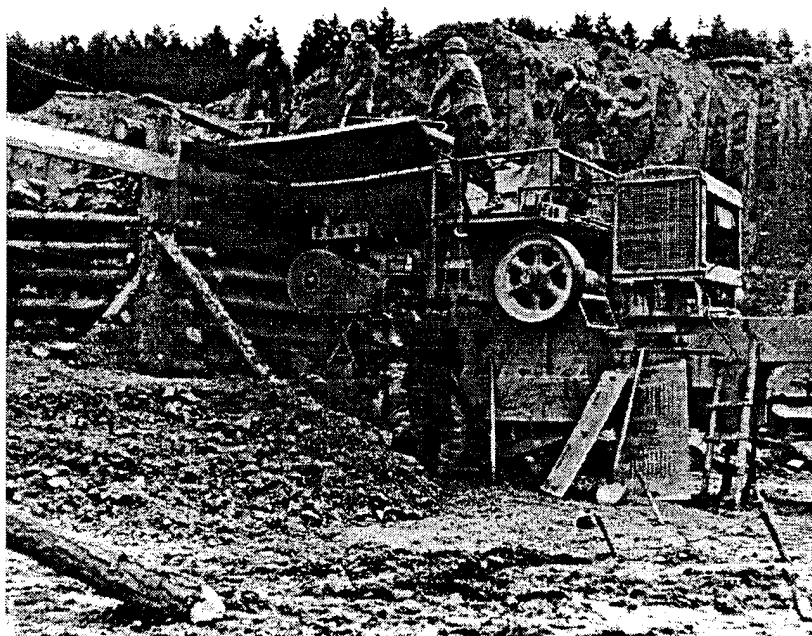


Figure 13. German civilian laborers in a quarry help Company B, 145th Engineer Battalion build a platform for a rock crusher near Vicht, Germany, 8 December 1944. Source: National Archives, Still Picture Branch, 145th Engineer Battalion files, Washington, D.C.

The III Corps and Third Army attacked in the afternoon of 21 December 1944, capturing the towns of Merzig and Ettelbruck. Cold weather continued to slow operations and limit air support. Third Army ordered corps commanders to "take immediate and vigorous action to enforce compliance with tire maintenance standards in order to relieve

the critical tire shortage." German opposition slowed the III Corps advance on 22 December, as Combat Command A of the 4th Armored Division arrived at Martelange, thirteen miles south of the besieged city of Bastogne, and Combat Command B moved to within ten miles of Bastogne when it arrived in Burdon.

Clear weather finally arrived on 23 December, allowing full utilization of Allied air power against the German offensive. Once again German resistance stiffened as III Corps units moved north to a line from Tadler-Hanville-Warnach. German air attacks also became a major factor in the Third Army area, with over one hundred aircraft bombing and strafing targets in zone. Air attacks increased again the following day with reports of 143 aircraft attacking. Fighting in the Heiderscheid and Kehman areas increased significantly as the Germans tried to blunt the III Corps attack. Engineer units assumed responsibility for camouflaging vehicles and tents with white wash, as soldiers across the front used thinned white paint to camouflage helmets, raincoats, and leggings.

Fighting escalated again on 25 December, Christmas Day, with "bitter and vicious fighting throughout the III Corps zone" as the Germans made their last attempts to stop the Third Army juggernaut. On 26 December, the 4th Armored Division, "hampered by snow, ice, bitter cold, and attacks on both flanks by the Germans," broke the siege and linked up with elements of the 101st Airborne Division at Assenois, two miles south of Bastogne. The Division formed the supply line into the city as Third Army efforts shifted to securing gains, mopping up bypassed enemy positions, and evacuating the wounded from Bastogne.

Snow camouflage continued to be a priority, as Third Army requisitioned hundreds of gallons of paint and thinner, along with five thousand mattress covers to make ten thousand "snow suits." Two German counter-attacks on Bastogne failed on 28 December, as Third Army increased security throughout the zone "due to a report that there existed special German assassin squads wearing U.S. Army uniforms whose missions were to kill the top Allied generals." On 29 December, III Corps assumed control of the 101st Airborne Division. The Division transitioned to the offense and captured the city of Marvie as the remainder of the Corps advanced against heavy enemy resistance. By the end of December, III Corps had captured the towns of Wardin, Neffe, and Lutrebois.

Third Army continued its relentless advance north from the Bastogne area throughout January, as the Germans fought and withdrew through the Siegfried Line. On 8 January, Patton issued orders for III Corps "to assume control of the 90th Infantry Division, pass control of the 4th Armored Division, and to attack on January 9 to the southeast of Bastogne." Third Army "personnel assisted in the repair of electric power lines throughout . . . Luxembourg" on 13 January, and by 14 January, a critical shortage of coal caused Third Army to "reduce the coal ration from 4 to 2 pounds per man per day," and issue guidance to reduce consumption by fifty percent. On 16 January, ice and snow practically brought tracked traffic to a standstill. Units modified tracked vehicles "by the welding of manganese steel lugs on every fifth block of steel track and replacing every fifth block of rubber track with a steel block equipped with such a lug." As Third Army officially closed the Bastogne campaign on 17 January, General Patton wrote:

. . . the Third Army utilized a total of 17 divisions and lost (in killed, wounded, and missing) a total of 24,598 men. In the same period the Germans utilized 20 divisions and lost a total of 18, 051 in POWs and enemy buried by us. Their estimated casualties, excluding nonbattle, for this period amount to 103,900 . . . the fighting quality of American troops never reached a higher level than in this operation. Neither intolerable weather nor the best troops in the possession of the Germans were able to stop them nor prevent their supply.<sup>21</sup>

By 28 January 1945, Third Army units were fighting in the Siegfried Line, inflicting heavy casualties and capturing over twenty-two thousand prisoners. The Germans, apparently focusing now on the eastern front, were "relying on the three factors of the Siegfried Line, favorable terrain, and the severe winter conditions." III Corps had advanced to the Our River and was consolidating gains by the end of January, when papers from the National Archives again prove productive.

This book highlights the actions of Third Army and III Corps, with the attached 145th Battalion, during the period not covered by National Archive documents. While we still do not know for certain what the battalion actually did during these eventful, yet undocumented months, we can combine clues to refine and reduce the possibilities. The letter of commendation read to the battalion on 7 March 1945 from the Commander of the 1137th Group mentioned that the "battalion played a vital part in giving direct support to an Infantry Division in the reduction of the so-called Bastogne Bulge."<sup>22</sup> III Corps conducted that attack with the 26th Infantry, 80th Infantry, and 4th Armored Divisions, with the 80th ID on the Corps East flank, the 4th AD on the West flank, and the 26th ID in the middle.<sup>23</sup> Using a map and the list of battalion Command Post locations found in Greenwalt's booklet on the 145th, one can speculate and develop a slightly better focused picture. On 13

December the Command Post was located at Keskastel; at Doncourt, France, on 21 December; Kopstal, Luxembourg, on 22 December; Tontelange, Belgium on 27 December; and Roodt-les-ell, Luxembourg on 3 January 1945.

Considering these locations and the reported locations of the three Divisions of III Corps, the 145th Battalion appears located toward the center of the Corps sector, thus best positioned to support the 26th ID. Further research of system and nonsystem III Corps and 26th ID materials may produce additional clues.

Information obtained from published sources external to the Army preservation system provide the only indication as to why the unit was originally redesignated. A major push for flexible groupings of engineer units, culminated in a 20 January 1943 message directing reorganization of engineer combat regiments "into an engineer combat group headquarters and two separate combat battalions."<sup>24</sup> The intent was to take advantage of the definition of an engineer group as a tactical organization and its ability to attach various types and size units. A group could supervise the training, then maintain tactical control of several combat battalions, as well as a variable number of other nondivisional engineer units, such as separate companies, water supply, topographic, and bridge battalions. The method was welcomed by many as a way "to provide some concentration and greater control in the training of nondivisional units."<sup>25</sup> There was also a general perception that combat regiments could not supervise attached units without prejudice and that the restructuring would prevent "us" versus "them" relationships. In effect, an Army acknowledgment that the bonds of a unit and allegiances of its soldiers can be stronger than unit

responsibilities to the Army. Others, however, argued that the concept was "cumbersome, wasteful, and probably unworkable."<sup>26</sup> In the end, engineer combat regiments, including the 35th Regiment, were restructured, while general service regiments remained intact.

#### Unpublished External Sources

Unfortunately, documentation explaining the resignation of the 145th Battalion to the 550th, and the 550th to the 70th, appears unavailable from any source. The CMH postulates that once the 145th Battalion inactivated after the war, the Army National Guard or Army Reserves may have requested the designation for one of their units, based on local desire for that specific number. The inactive "paper" unit, would be assigned the next available number, previously unused, and in all probability, higher.<sup>27</sup> There is no "paper trail" to support this hypothesis, however, there is a 145th Engineer Battalion serving with the Alabama National Guard at Centreville, Alabama. Officially, the Alabama battalion is not the same 145th Battalion in this case study and it shares none of the lineage.<sup>28</sup> Circumstantial evidence, then, suggests the CMH theory is valid and explains why the 145th Battalion was redesignated as the 550th. Not even circumstantial evidence exists to explain why the 550th was redesignated as the 70th. The CMH does recognize a late 1940's trend to redesignate all type units from higher to lower numbers,<sup>29</sup> but nothing is available to indicate that this battalion was part of this trend, why the number 70 was chosen, or why the third redesignation occurred less than two years after the second.



There is no indication the number 70 was ever associated with an engineer battalion prior to this redesignation.<sup>30</sup>

The final sources of information lie with the former members of the unit. Glen I. Fredrickson joined the 145th Battalion as a water purification specialist in 1943 and remained with it until January 1945.<sup>31</sup> He recalls coming ashore on Omaha Beach, not Utah, in early July 1944, but says the battalion was originally supposed to have landed as part of the initial assault forces. They were delayed in England at some point, postponing their arrival in France. They did mostly General Support work with Third Army, not supporting any one specific Division or Corps. The battalion was in the Ardennes area during the infamous "Battle of the Bulge," supporting Third Army units driving towards besieged Bastogne and finally ended the war in Wurzburg.<sup>32</sup>

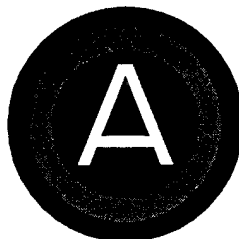


Figure 14. Shoulder patch of the Third Army. Source: Federal Clip Art: Premier I-Army CD-ROM (Annandale, VA: One Mile Up, Inc., 1994).

Lieutenant Colonel (Retired) Robert J. Greenwalt joined the original 35th Regiment, commanded a company on the ALCAN Highway and the 145th, and stayed with the 145th Battalion throughout the war. During an interview, he provided additional insights into the heritage of the

battalion and confirms much of what we have collected and pieced together. The 2nd Battalion, 35th Regiment returned from its work on the ALCAN in August 1943 and was stationed at Camp White, Oregon, near the town of Medford.<sup>33</sup> As the Commander of Company E, 35th Regiment, he became the original Commander of Company B, 145th Engineer Battalion on redesignation day, 25 September 1943. He remembers the battalion receiving movement orders to Europe on Easter Sunday, 1944, and moving to Camp Shanks, New York. Arriving on a Friday, the battalion boarded the *New Amsterdam* and departed on a Sunday. The *New Amsterdam* had departed Holland just prior to the war and was recruited to support the war effort as a troop transport. He confirms arriving in Scotland and staging in southern England and remembers the battalion landing on Utah beach, still under German indirect fire, in early July 1944. While in England, the battalion was officially assigned to Patton's Third Army to support the allied invasion deception operation. The battalion crossed the English Channel with General Bradley's First Army, however, and remained with First Army until Patton and the Third Army were committed on the mainland. Soldiers of the battalion wore the Third Army patch throughout the war years, except in combat, and they were never issued a distinctive unit insignia or crest. Greenwalt was unaware of any historical unit property and did not remember any specific customs or traditions in the battalion. He left the battalion in September 1945 while it was still in Europe and was not present for the inactivation. At that time, Army policy sent soldiers home for discharge based on a point system that credited those with the longest time on active duty,

time spent with the National Guard prior to the war, married soldiers, parents, etc.

#### Assessment

Overall, the history of the 145th Engineer Battalion is much more complete than that of the 2nd Battalion, 35th Regiment, mostly from Army preservation system sources. Much of this is attributable to the documents preserved in the National Archives, the CMH, and again, the personal efforts of individuals. We have a significant amount of detailed historical information on the battalion and its activities during large portions of the war, but several large and potentially significant holes still exist in the story. There are no records documenting the activities of the battalion for the period from the redesignation at Camp White, Oregon, until its arrival in Scotland almost seven months later. More important, the period between the end of the Unit History in October 1944 and the beginning of the Unit Journal in February 1945, appears completely lost. Missions and accomplishments during the period, including the battalion's role in the "Battle of the Bulge," may be gone forever. There are some indicators of life after the war, but that period, up to the inactivation in January 1946, is also sparse and incomplete. The confusion over what records the National Archives claims to possess and what is actually available is also disturbing. There is no record of unit historical property at all, unbelievable when one considers the "natural" propensity of soldiers to collect and display war trophies and to surround themselves with memorabilia. At least one document mentions a

German Luger in the possession of a battalion soldier. It is difficult to believe that in over a year in combat, the battalion collected nothing it considered worthy of keeping, preserving, or honoring. Any customs and traditions that evolved during this period have also disappeared, understandable if they were not documented. Customs and traditions require continuous indoctrination and familiarization of incoming personnel. If not documented, they die with the inactivation of a unit. Once again, one has to wonder, if this amount of material can be reconstructed, how much has been lost?

### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Statement of Service for the 70th Engineer Battalion, U.S. Army Center for Military History (Cited hereafter as CMH), n.d.

<sup>2</sup> CMH, letter to 1st Infantry Division, 4 November 1992.

<sup>3</sup> National Archives (Cited hereafter as NA), letter to author, 28 December 1992.

<sup>4</sup> Unit History, Headquarters, 145th Engineer Battalion, n.d., 145th Engineer Battalion file, NA, Washington, D.C.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 14 July 1944 entry.

<sup>6</sup> A tactical panel bridge invented and originally produced in Great Britain, widely used by the Allies in World War II. Still in use today, it is a through truss bridge, manually assembled by connecting panels end to end. The main girders on each side of the bridge can be assembled in multiple widths and heights to provide added strength and/or length of span. Multiple widths and heights are described as "Double-Singles," that is two panels wide and one high, or "Double-Triples," two panels wide and three high, etc. Components of the bridge can be assembled to form piers that are used as intermediate supports for long spans. The Bailey system is highly labor-intensive but also highly versatile. The primary use of the panel bridge is as a temporary line of communications bridge, replacing assault bridging and replaced by more permanent structures such as a timber trestle bridge. U.S. Army Engineer School, Combat Engineer Systems Handbook (Fort Leonard Wood, April 1991), 3.

<sup>7</sup> A semi-permanent bridge designed and constructed primarily from timber. Usually built to replace temporary assault or panel bridges on lines of communication.

<sup>8</sup> Unit History, Headquarters, 145th Engineer Battalion.

<sup>9</sup> Unit Journal, Headquarters, 145th Engineer Battalion, n.d., 145th Engineer Battalion file, NA, Washington, D.C.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> NA, letter to author, 17 November 1992.

<sup>12</sup> U.S. Army Military History Institute, letter to author, 23 September 1992.

<sup>13</sup> U.S. Army Military History Institute, letter to author, 22 September 1992.

<sup>14</sup> CMH, Unit Record of Service, n.d., 70th Engineer Battalion file, CMH, Washington, D.C.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Adjutant General's Office, War Department, letter, 30 January 1947, 70th Engineer Battalion file, CMH, Washington, D.C.

<sup>17</sup> Adjutant General's Office, Department of the Army, letter, 15 March 1949, 70th Engineer Battalion file, CMH, Washington, D.C.

<sup>18</sup> Shelby L Stanton, Order of Battle: U.S. Army, World War II (Navato, CA; Presidio Press, 1984), 538, 571.

<sup>19</sup> Charles M. Province, Patton's Third Army: A Daily Combat Diary (New York; Hippocrene Books, 1992)

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 121.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 154.

<sup>22</sup> Unit Journal, Headquarters, 145th Engineer Battalion.

<sup>23</sup> Province, 119, 125, 126.

<sup>24</sup> Blanche D. Coll, Jean E. Keith, and Herbert H. Rosenthal, The Corps of Engineers: Troops and Equipment (1958; reprint, Washington: Center for Military History, 1988), 345.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 346.

<sup>26</sup> Colonel John B. Hughes, Army Ground Forces Engineer, as quoted in Blanche D. Coll, Jean E. Keith, and Herbert H. Rosenthal, The Corps of Engineers: Troops and Equipment (Washington: Center for Military History, 1988), 346.

<sup>27</sup> Romana M. Danysh, Historian, CMH, Organizational History Branch, interview with author, Washington, D.C., 9 November 1994.

<sup>28</sup> Romana M. Danysh, telephone interview with author, Fort Leavenworth, KS, 8 February 1995.

<sup>29</sup> Danysh, interview, 9 November 1994.

<sup>30</sup> Danysh, interview, 8 February 1995.

<sup>31</sup> Glen I. Fredrickson, interview by author, 4 March 1991.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Robert J. Greenwalt, interview by author, 11 November 1994.

## CHAPTER 5

### THE HERITAGE OF THE 70th ENGINEER COMBAT BATTALION:

1 APRIL 1949 TO 30 NOVEMBER 1969

#### Heritage Provided by the System

The Statement of Service from the U.S. Army Center for Military History showed that the 550th Engineer Combat Battalion was redesignated as the 70th Engineer Combat Battalion on 15 March 1949. The redesignation was a paper change only and did not affect a manned unit. The 70th Battalion activated on 1 April 1949 as a manned and equipped unit in Austria, and held onto the 70th numerical designation until it once again inactivated on 30 November 1969 at Fort Lewis, Washington.

The Statement of Service also credited the battalion with four unit awards and participation in eleven campaigns for this period of active service. The battalion earned the highest American unit award, the Presidential Unit Citation with streamer embroidered Pleiku Province, as well as three Army Meritorious Unit Commendations with streamers embroidered Vietnam 1965-1966, Vietnam 1966, and Vietnam 1966-1967. It was credited with participation in eleven campaigns in Vietnam: Defense; Counteroffensive; Counteroffensive, Phase II; Counteroffensive, Phase III; Tet Counteroffensive; Counteroffensive, Phase IV; Counteroffensive, Phase Counteroffensive, Phase; Counteroffensive, Phase Counteroffensive, Phase VI; Tet 69/Counteroffensive; Summer-Fall 1969; and Winter-Spring 1970.<sup>1</sup>

Once again, however, the Army system provided very little history, and nothing about the property,<sup>2</sup> or customs and traditions. This was another instance where the system provided no explanation or embellishment of unit awards or campaigns, no reference to people, and no indication of mission. One could quickly deduce that the battalion formed in Austria and spent several years in Vietnam, but there still remained more unknowns, than knowns, about the heritage of the unit. Fort Riley would once more have to reconstruct the heritage for this period of the battalion from the same multiple sources of the Army historical preservation system and the other sources external to the system.

#### Heritage Possessed but Not Proffered by the System

From within the system, the National Archives and Records Administration does not acknowledge possession of any written records or documents pertaining to the 70th Engineer Battalion.<sup>3</sup> This is disconcerting, since the Archives are supposed to maintain all documents through 1954 and all of the Vietnam records.<sup>4</sup> The location and responsibility for maintaining the records after 1954, not including the Vietnam documents, are apparently undefined.

The Still Pictures Branch of the National Archives originally acknowledged and provided only one photograph of the 70th Engineer Battalion for this period,<sup>5</sup> yet later forwarded two other photographs of the battalion in Austria.<sup>6</sup> The Historical Resources Office (HRO) of the CMH, in response to an inquiry from the Director of the Fort Riley Museum, directed research efforts towards the Military History Institute



and a "published history of the 70th Engineer Battalion that covers a portion of its service in Vietnam." However, when requested through the interlibrary loan program at the Combined Arms Research Library (CARL) at Fort Leavenworth, the MHI was unable to identify any "published history." What they were able to produce were several operational reports from the 70th Battalion in Vietnam. The CARL also had several operational reports from the battalion in Vietnam on file, that when combined with those from MHI, painted a fairly complete picture of activities, missions, and operations of the unit throughout the Vietnam tour of duty. Since neither the MHI, nor the CARL, are an official part of the Army unit historical preservation system, documents obtained from these institutions will be addressed later in this chapter and treated as information from sources outside the system.

The same letter from the CMH HRO contained copies of the General Orders for the Presidential Unit Citation and the Meritorious Unit Commendations the battalion had received for actions in Vietnam. The orders specified attachments and detachments to the battalion and the citations for the awards. These presented the first tangible information on what the battalion missions were and added the first human dimension to this period of the battalion's legacy.

The Presidential Unit Citation was awarded to the 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile) and attached units, including the 70th Engineer Battalion, for "outstanding performance of duty and extraordinary heroism in action against an armed enemy . . . during the period 23 October 1965 to 26 November 1965."<sup>7</sup> The division was initially committed to defend a key communications facility in Pleiku and relieve

a besieged Special Forces camp at Plei Me, in Pleiku Province. After breaking through to the camp, the division mission changed to the offense and the destruction of a North Vietnamese regular army division. The 1st Cavalry pursued the North Vietnamese "across the dense and trackless jungles of the west-central highlands," and "in unfavorable terrain and under logistical and tactical conditions that would have stopped a unit with less capability, motivation, and esprit."<sup>8</sup> The division pushed the enemy from positions at Plei Me, to the foot of the Chu Pong Massif in the Ia Drang valley, where a fresh regiment reinforced the enemy. Using their airmobile capability, soldiers of the 1st Cavalry "completely defeated a numerically superior enemy" and blunted "the offensive capability of the North Vietnamese Army in the II Corps tactical zone."<sup>9</sup>

The 70th Engineer Battalion (Combat) (Army) and the attached 511th Engineer Company (Panel Bridge), received the first Meritorious Unit Commendation for "support of military operations in the Republic of Vietnam from August 1965 to June 1966."<sup>10</sup>

The members of these units demonstrated extraordinary fortitude, tenacity and technical competence while providing superb combat engineer support to the 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile). Immediately after arrival in-country, the Battalion began clearing roads for the deployment of the Division in AN Khe. Assuming a two-shift, seven-day-a-week operation, the members of this unit selflessly devoted all their efforts to prepare the cantonment area for the arrival of the Division Forces. Often working under hostile fire, the 70th Engineer Battalion (Combat) (Army) manifested a spirit of aggressive determination in the prompt and efficient execution of every mission . . . Through personal sacrifice, courage and singular perseverance, these two units dauntlessly launched a massive construction program of logistical complexes, supply depots, hospitals, the Division headquarters and numerous roads, defensive positions, airfields and cantonment facilities. Despite the harsh environment and major shortages of supplies and equipment, every task was marked

with the highest degree of professionalism and consummate  
workmanship . . . .<sup>11</sup>



Figure 15. A fund to send a deserving 15 year old Austrian girl through school to fulfill her ambition to become a school teacher has been set up through the combined contributions of the men of Company B, 70th Engineer Battalion at Saalfelden and a group of Saalfelden citizens. PFC Almus K. Lowell of Silverton, Oregon, personally contributed a check for \$100 made out to a stateside mail order house to buy necessary clothing for the student. Gertrude Knoll, the young student, thanks PFC Lowell as the other students and the 'house mother' Kaethe Schmiederer, look on. 18 September 1953. Source: National Archives, Still Picture Branch, 70th Engineer Battalion files, Washington, D.C.

The second Meritorious Unit Commendation was awarded to the battalion and 511th Engineer Company (Panel Bridge), for the period from June to December 1966. Citation highlights included "superb combat engineer support to the 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile)" and the

planning and initial construction of the division base camp. "Often working around the clock, the unit personnel constructed a logistical complex, 140 bed hospital, division headquarters complex, aircraft storage and maintenance facilities, security lights and guard towers on the base perimeter."<sup>12</sup> Also stressed is the "partial construction of a cantonment area for more than twenty-one thousand men." The third Meritorious Unit Commendation was awarded to the battalion (less Company D), the 511th Engineer Company, and the 444th Engineer Detachment for the period from 4 December 1966 to 10 October 1967. The battalion was cited for completing "the first concrete runway built in a theater of operations by engineer troops using a slip-form paving machine," and "Operating under adverse conditions created by weather and terrain, the battalion aggressively pursued a massive construction program of logistical complexes, airfields, and recreational facilities while continuously repairing bridges and upgrading roads along 21 miles . . . between An Khe and Pleiku."<sup>13</sup>

Again, using a copy of the Statement of Service as justification, Fort Riley requested certificates and orders for the battalion's unit awards, including the Presidential Unit Citation, from the Total Army Personnel Command.<sup>14</sup> Additional confirmation of unit awards was found in Army Pamphlet 672-1, listing the unit, period covered, and order number and date.<sup>15</sup> The award certificates and copies of the Army General Orders arrived four weeks later.

The Archives Branch of the U.S. Army Military History Institute at Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania, possesses a "Company Command in Vietnam Interview" by Lieutenant Colonel Jerry Pauler, who commanded

Company B, 70th Engineer Battalion during the period 1965 to 1966.<sup>16</sup>

Unfortunately, access is extremely limited and one must visit the Institute to review the document. It is not available for interlibrary loan since it is an Oral History Transcript, part of the Army Oral History Program for debriefing senior officers and civilians.

"Transcripts are maintained . . . in accordance with the interviewee's signed access agreement," and photocopying is prohibited.<sup>17</sup>

The U.S. Army Institute of Heraldry quickly produced photocopies of the Distinctive Unit Insignia (unit crest) and coat of arms of the 70th Battalion once contacted by Fort Riley.<sup>18</sup> Their records showed that both were approved for the first time on 13 February 1953,<sup>19</sup> although a follow up letter to the battalion on 2 September 1960 indicated that the unit crest the battalion submitted for approval in 1952 had been returned for corrections and never been resubmitted.<sup>20</sup> Both letters included descriptions of the coat of arms and distinctive insignia.

#### Blazonry

Shield: Argent,<sup>21</sup> somee-de-lis,<sup>22</sup> a bend of arched gules.<sup>23</sup>

Crest: None

Motto: Valeur-Ingenuite (Valor-Ingenuity)

#### Description

The colors, scarlet and white, are those of the Corps of Engineers. The fleurs-de-lis scattered over the shield symbolize the organization's World War II service in Europe, and the curved diagonal band represents outstanding service in the construction of the Canadian-Alaskan Military Highway.

The distinctive insignia consists of the shield and motto of the coat of arms for this organization.<sup>24</sup>



Figure 16. Distinctive Unit Insignia of the 70th Engineer Battalion.  
Source: Institute of Heraldry, letter to author, 16 September 1992.

The final information obtained from the official preservation system of the Army came with the physical review of the CMH records, conducted in conjunction with this thesis, two years after the initial efforts to reactivate the battalion. This record review again confirmed the Army possessed additional historical information not provided to the reactivating unit. The records capture the technical history of the unit from the point it was redesignated the 550th Battalion in 1949, to the inactivation of the 70th Battalion in 1969, and provides additional historical detail and invaluable leads for reconstruction research.

The 550th Battalion was redesignated on 15 March 1949, in a Department of the Army letter that assigned the unit the new designation of the 70th Engineer Combat Battalion. The letter also assigned the unit to the European Command and directed the unit "be activated and organized . . . at the earliest practicable date" under the 1948 Table of Organization and Equipment 5-16 N.<sup>25</sup> The activation of the Headquarters and Headquarters Service Company, 70th Engineer Battalion occurred on 1 April 1949 at Salzburg, Austria, with an authorized strength of 20 officers, 3 warrant officers, and 233 enlisted men.<sup>26</sup> Personnel and equipment for the unit came from "sources within Zone

Command Austria." Company A was assigned to European Command on 5 April 1949<sup>27</sup> and was activated at Innsbruck, Austria, on 1 May 1949, with an authorized strength of 5 officers and 155 enlisted men.<sup>28</sup> Personnel and equipment came from the 518th Engineer Company that was inactivated. The battalion transferred from Salzburg to Camp McCauley, Austria in June 1950 and reorganized under the 1948 Table of Organization and Equipment 5-15N, on 26 July 1950.<sup>29</sup> Company D was constituted for the first time on 16 January 1951<sup>30</sup> and was activated, along with Companies B and C, at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, on 1 February 1951.<sup>31</sup> The companies were assigned to Third Army,<sup>32</sup> then attached to V Corps and the 522nd Engineer Service Battalion at Fort Bragg.<sup>33</sup>

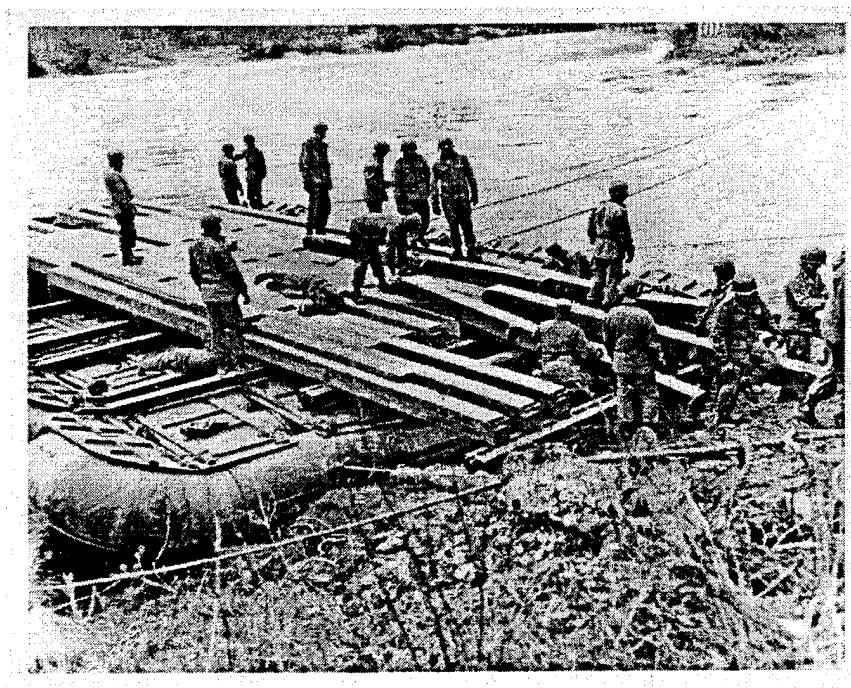


Figure 17. Men of the 70th Engineer Battalion construct a pontoon bridge across the Traun River during exercise 'Tran.' 1950. Source: National Archives, Still Picture Branch, 70th Engineer Battalion files, Washington, D.C.

The three companies departed Fort Bragg in July 1951, arriving at Camp Kilmer, New Jersey, on 23 July for staging. They arrived at the New York port of embarkation on 31 July, boarded the *USNS General Callan*, and departed on 1 August. The ship docked at Leghorn, Italy, on 12 August. From there Company B arrived at Linz, Austria, and Companies C and D arrived at Saalfelden, Austria, on 13 August.

The battalion was redesignated as the 70th Engineer Battalion (Combat) on 16 March 1953, and the battalion Medical Detachment activated on 31 March 1953,<sup>34</sup> giving the battalion an authorized strength of 34 officers, 8 warrant officers, and 845 enlisted men.<sup>35</sup> As part of the withdrawal of U.S. forces following the 15 May 1955, Austrian Peace Treaty, the Army reassigned the battalion to U.S. Army, Europe, on 14 August 1955 and it departed Austria for Germany four days later.<sup>36</sup> On 15 October 1955, the battalion reorganized as the 70th Engineer Battalion (Combat) (Army) under the 1955 Table of Organization and Equipment 5-35R and Company D inactivated as part of that reorganization. The battalion remained in Germany until 1957, when it rotated back to the U.S. and was assigned to the 3rd Army. The unit was alerted on 1 November 1956 that it would be replaced in Germany by the 168th Engineer Battalion under the Gyroscope program. The advance detachment departed by air from Rhein Main, Germany, on 2 April 1957, for Brooklyn Army Terminal, then continued on to Fort Campbell, Kentucky. The main body departed from Bremerhaven, Germany, on 20 March 1957 aboard the *USNS Hodges*, ship #25062-A. It arrived at the Brooklyn Army Terminal on 2 April, then continued on to Fort Campbell, arriving later the same day.



The authorized strength of the battalion on 19 May 1958 was 31 officers, 1 warrant officer, 106 NCOs and 505 enlisted men. On 20 October 1958, Company D, 70th Engineer Battalion officially disbanded and on 18 November another reorganization, this time under the 1958 Table of Organization and Equipment 5-35D, resulted in the battalion Medical Detachment being disbanded.

From 1958 to 1965, the battalion settled into routine garrison operations at Fort Campbell, interrupted by deployments for major exercises. The battalion first participated in Exercise DRAGON HEAD from 26 October to 6 November 1959 in the Fort Bragg--Camp Mackall--Sandhills area of the Carolinas. For the 1961 SWIFT STRIKE exercise, 2 to 20 August, the battalion deployed to Patrick, South Carolina. It returned to South Carolina the following year, when the battalion spent the month of August at Fort Jackson for the 30 day Exercise SWIFT STRIKE II, departing Fort Campbell on 31 July 1962. On 9 October 1962, the 70th Battalion received notification alerting it for deployment to the Memphis Naval Air Station "to enforce certain court orders in the state of Mississippi." The battalion departed Fort Campbell on 27 September, passed through the Memphis NAS on 30 September, and arrived at Oxford, Mississippi, on 30 September 1962. It remained there until 7 October 1962, when it left for Fort Campbell, arriving there later the same day. A detachment from the battalion, consisting of 1 officer and 45 enlisted men, returned to the Oxford area "for approximately one week" on 5 March 1963 for unspecified duty. A portion of the battalion, 8 officers and 156 enlisted men, departed Fort Campbell on 13 May 1963, for Fort McClellan, Alabama, and returned around 1 June. The reason for this

deployment was unspecified, other than "for use by CG, Third U.S. Army."

On 30 July 1963, a motor convoy with 18 officers and 454 enlisted men left Fort Campbell for Vershaw, South Carolina, to participate in Exercise SWIFT STRIKE III, returning on 19 August. The battalion participated in Exercise PALM TREE at Fort McClellan, Alabama, during the summer of 1963 and another exercise at Fort George G. Meade in August, arriving back at Fort Campbell on 20 August.

On 12 November 1963, the records show the 70th Battalion was assigned "Priority Status" of 2.1 and a "Readiness Category of C-1." The authorized strength in June 1964, was 32 officers, 3 warrant officers and 587 enlisted men. The unit reorganized as a (Combat) (Army) battalion on 25 June 1965, and the priority status and readiness category changed to 2.08, and D-1 respectively. It was authorized 30 officers, 3 warrant officers, and 586 enlisted men. On 10 July 1965, the battalion was alerted for deployment to Vietnam and assignment to the U.S. Army, Pacific. The battalion left Fort Campbell on 3 and 4 August 1965 and flew to Oakland Army Base, California, closing on 5 August. Uploading upon the *USS Mann* the same day, 600 men of the battalion left the United States, arriving in Vietnam on 22 August. A 12 man advance party preceded the main body, arriving at Tan Son Nhut, Vietnam, on 16 August by air.

The battalion reorganized under several Modified Tables of Organization and Equipment while in Vietnam. A May 1967 modification changed the authorized strength of the battalion to 31 officers, 3 warrant officers, and 610 enlisted. The most radical change occurred on 12 June 1967, when Company D was reconstituted, reactivated, and

allotted to the Regular Army as part of the 70th Battalion. This reactivation of the fourth line company apparently applied to all nondivisional Combat Engineer battalions, at least those in Vietnam. This change increased the authorized strength of the battalion to 36 officers, 3 warrant officers, and 755 enlisted, a total of 794. On 7 October 1969, the Army issued instructions for the battalion to inactivate "as soon as possible, but not later than 31 December 1969." Air movement from Long Binh, Vietnam, to the U.S. Army Training Center and Fort Lewis, Washington, began on 21 November and the last flight arrived on 29 November. On 30 November 1969, the 70th Engineer Battalion inactivated at Fort Lewis, Washington.<sup>37</sup>

While not enough by itself to rally the reactivating battalion and motivate the soldiers, these details do provide a fairly solid historical skeleton and establish strong clues that additional research can flesh out a heritage. Interestingly, the CMH files also provide solid evidence that the recent reactivation is not the only time the battalion has searched for its "roots." There are several documents that provide compelling examples that the unit had lost whatever heritage it possessed and was striving to recover whatever was available.

On 21 July 1949, the Historical Division, Special Staff, forwarded a "statement of lineage and battle honors of the 70th Engineer Combat Battalion" to the battalion Commander in Austria,<sup>38</sup> followed by a corrected copy on 12 December 1949.<sup>39</sup> On 16 May 1950, the battalion Adjutant contacted the Historical Division, Special Staff, requesting if the battalion had a Distinctive Unit Insignia (unit crest). The letter

was forwarded to the Office of the Quartermaster General and was apparently never acted on.<sup>40</sup> On 19 May 1951, Lieutenant Colonel R.M. Clock, Commander of the 70th Engineer Combat Battalion in Austria, contacted the Historical Division of the Army Corps of Engineers asking for information on the lineage, honors, and unit crest. At the time, he understood "that the 70th Engineers was organized in the early days of World War II as a Light Pontoon Company, and that subsequently it was reorganized as a Shore Battalion in an Amphibious Brigade."<sup>41</sup> The letter was forwarded to the Office of the Chief of Military History for action, since the Corps of Engineers files "contain[ed] no continuous accounts of the 70th Engineers."<sup>42</sup> The Office of the Chief of Military History provided an "official statement of lineage and battle honors of the 70th Engineer Combat Battalion . . . in duplicate," and forwarded the request for the unit insignia to the Quartermaster General, who apparently never acted on it.<sup>43</sup>

Meanwhile, the 522nd Engineer Service Battalion, responsible for activating Companies B, C, and D, at Fort Bragg, was also seeking historical information on the 70th Battalion.<sup>44</sup> On 28 April 1953, the 70th Battalion again contacted the Chief of Military History, requesting "available historical material involving the 70th Engineer Battalion (Combat) be furnished in order that postcards and booklets can be prepared for the purpose of stressing traditions of this unit."<sup>45</sup> The CMH essentially responded that they could not prepare a narrative "because of other commitments," they already had sent a statement of lineage and honors statement to the unit, and that the unit could check

for old records at the Kansas City Records Center and old photographs with Chief Signal Officer, Department of the Army.<sup>46</sup>

One wonders if the battalion pursued the issue after that, since the next correspondence in the file is a request from the battalion to have 15 March designated as Unit Day.<sup>47</sup> The Office of the Chief of Military History pointed out, that in accordance with the Lineage and Honors certificate forwarded to the unit on 9 August 1960, the battalion was in a period of inactive status on 15 March, the day the unit was redesignated as the 70th. The letter recommended 15 July, the activation date of the 35th Engineer Regiment, as an appropriate unit day unless the battalion determined another day was more noteworthy, based on some event in the unit history.<sup>48</sup> There is no indication that the issue was ever resolved.

The 70th Battalion wrote the Kansas City Records Center from Vietnam on 9 February 1966, once again looking for "any records, General Orders, Histories, or any other information" available on the unit, "in an effort to have a more complete history of the organization."<sup>49</sup> The letter was forwarded to the World War II Reference Branch on the National Archives, who requested and received a lineage statement from the Chief of Military History. Again, there is no indication of action after that. The last piece of information in the CMH files was a memo to the Commander of the 937th Engineer Group on 24 January 1967, forwarding new Lineage and Honors certificates for units assigned to the group in Vietnam, including the 70th.<sup>50</sup>

This series of exchanges provides critical, documentary evidence that the heritage preservation system of the Army has a history

of not properly preserving the heritage of the case study unit. While there is no way to determine how much heritage the 145th Battalion captured, documented, and turned in to system agencies responsible for preservation, it is clear that the comprehensive system of programs, policies, and institutions was unable to provide the reactivating 70th Battalion with the heritage to which it was entitled. There is also clear evidence that even with the battalion on continuous active duty after 1949, preservation of unit heritage proved elusive.

Combined, the information maintained by the historical preservation system of the Army is substantial. Unit awards, movements, stationing locations, and even the dates and locations of some peacetime training exercises are well documented. It is apparent the unit was involved in some of the civil unrest of the early 1960's, and the battalion distinctive unit insignia, or unit crest, is clearly explained and recorded. Unit heraldry, at least the design and preservation of designs, appears to be a strong point in the system. Unfortunately, it is equally apparent that large portions of the unit heritage remain missing. There is practically no information on the battalion while in Austria, Germany, or Fort Campbell, and little exists on the daily activities and missions in Vietnam. Photographs, unit documents, unit colors and guidons, customs and traditions, and most important, the human stories of the unit remain missing for this entire period. No unit historical property, if there ever was any, has survived to provide a tangible link to the past. What little the Army preservation system has collected and maintained remains dry, detached, impersonal, incomplete, and surreal.

Surprisingly, it was the Military History Institute, at Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania, and the Combined Arms Research Library, at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, that proved the most valuable source of official battalion documents for this period. Though neither are part of the official unit history preservation system of the Army, both are Army institutions that preserve documents that enter their possession. Neither has the responsibility to obtain or preserve record copies of documents and any documents they possess are more the result of chance, but both supplement the institutions and the system that has that responsibility.<sup>51</sup> In this case, by combining the assets of both facilities, almost all of the 70th Engineer Battalion Command or Operational Reports for the Vietnam years are available.

While these lack the daily details of the 145th Battalion Unit Journal of World War II, they provide a substantial amount of detail on period highlights, and taken together, rival the information obtained from the 145th Unit History. The drawback of the Operational Reports is that they tend to focus on technical aspects of missions and practically ignore the human aspects of the operations and life in Vietnam.

The 70th Battalion, Commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Leonard Edelstein, prepared for deployment to Vietnam from 1 July to 2 August 1965. The unit worked to meet Army requirements for overseas movement, conducted about ten days of training in combat engineering and small unit tactics, fended a one to two week leave for all members of the battalion, and outloaded equipment and personnel during the period. Movement covered the period from 3 to 23 August, first moving by air to Oakland, California, then boarding a ship for Vietnam. Training

continued during the voyage focusing on "overseas orientation and combat engineering subjects related to anticipated in-country demands." The battalion arrived at Qui Nhon, Vietnam, linked up with equipment that arrived three days earlier, and moved to a field location. The battalion, reporting to the 937th Engineer Group, became fully operational on 26 August as unpacking and establishment of base camp operations continued.

The first mission came the same day, to support Operation HIGHLAND, the deployment of the 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile) into field locations near An Khe. The battalion quickly mobilized and formed Task Force Bolton, commanded by the battalion Executive Officer and consisting of Companies A and C. The Task Force moved to a camp near the An Khe airstrip, coordinated work with the Assistant Division Engineer of the division, and began work on an access road, their first project in Vietnam, on the morning of 28 August 1965. Other major projects included clearance of a two by four kilometer area for the division Heliport, repair and maintenance of the An Khe runway, construction of a logistical complex, repair of additional area roads, and engineer reconnaissance. With the initial elements of the division scheduled to arrive on 11 September, the battalion instituted 24 hour operations on 3 September. The schedule was split into two ten-hour shifts with a one-hour maintenance break between each shift. Equipment was operated "on a 20 hour day, seven day a week schedule for a period of 46 days" resulting in a significant lack of repair parts. The unit deployed with the required fifteen days worth of parts, but those were quickly used without replacement and no higher level maintenance units



or facilities had yet been deployed. Security was an obvious concern, the outer perimeter being manned by the 1st Brigade, 101st Airborne Division, but other than occasional sniper fire, very little hostile activity occurred.<sup>52</sup>

The immediate higher headquarters for the battalion was the 937th Engineer Group (Combat), followed by the 18th Engineer Brigade, the United States Army, Vietnam, and the United States Army, Pacific. Direct support work continued for the 1st Cavalry Division into 1966, with nothing but construction missions being assigned. The battalion did not support divisional combat missions, "but was, on occasion, employed in the role of division or brigade reserve, principally for the purpose of assisting with the defense of the Base Camp." Various units were attached to the battalion for specific missions. The largest was the 511th Engineer Company (Panel Bridge), joining the unit on 4 November 1965 for an "indefinite period."

The battalion spent most of the early months in Vietnam struggling with resource limitations. The attachment of a full engineer light equipment company was expected in October 1965, but "inadequate port unloading and transportation facilities" kept the majority of the company aboard ship for over three months. The delay in augmented capabilities caused delays in battalion projects. Equipment operational rates worsened as repair parts became harder to find. Support maintenance units arrived in theater during the last three months of 1965 to help, but they came without repair parts stocks. Attempting to improve the deteriorating situation, the Army in Vietnam instituted a "Red Ball" program to ship specific parts for deadlined equipment into

Vietnam by air. Construction material availability also limited progress. Material arrived in large enough quantities, but often came without the right mix. The shortage of one or two items, particularly large bridge timbers, electrical wiring, and plumbing materials delayed many projects. The local Vietnamese contractor was unable to provide the amount of rock required for concrete and road construction, as all rock was hand crushed by "local civilian laborers." A mechanical rock crusher was expected in early 1966 to alleviate that problem. The unusual weather and terrain offered unique challenges, particularly in the areas of soil stability and drainage.<sup>53</sup>

Civic action projects, such as the construction of an elementary school and construction of bridges that linked hamlets to farmlands, also crept into the battalion activities. The stated purpose of these efforts was "to improve the living conditions of the local population and thereby foster a greater degree of mutual respect and understanding between the local Vietnamese Nationals, the established government of the Republic of Vietnam, and the US Forces." In addition to the projects, the battalion "adopted" a portion of a local refugee village, providing scheduled medical care three times weekly, issuing clothes and personal hygiene items, teaching sanitation and health, and providing a large number of gifts for Christmas, 1965. The battalion also employed 114 to 190 local nationals, providing them a source of income, while gaining a needed manpower boost on battalion construction projects.<sup>54</sup>

A significant milestone was reached on 27 January 1966, when a 75-ton per hour, rock crusher became operational and hand crushing of

rock ceased. Over 56 thousand tons of rock was crushed between 27 January and 30 April, greatly enhanced battalion road building and concrete capabilities. A second unit arrived on 23 April and went into operation soon after arrival. To speed up construction of the An Khe base camp for the 1st Cavalry Division, the battalion and division established construction priorities and work allocation categories. Division troops, under engineer supervision, built Category I facilities such as mess halls, billets, latrines, and administrative buildings. Roads, maintenance and warehouse buildings, petroleum storage and distribution systems, hospitals, and other buildings beyond the capabilities of troop units went to engineer troops under Category II. Pacific Architects and Engineers (PAE) or local civilian contractors carried out Category III construction, initially limited to latrine-shower combinations. On 24 January, the battalion attached the 630th Engineer Company (Light Equipment) and detached it on 1 April. Equipment repair parts and certain construction materials continued to be a shortage, but by May 1966, new twists were developing. The "Redball" system had begun producing results and lowering the amount of equipment deadlined for higher echelon repair parts, but unit repair parts, especially tires became a shortage. The 70th Battalion was forced to expend man and equipment hours transporting most of the required supplies and construction materials, since transportation units were still limited from the supply depot in Qui Nhon, to the battalion area at An Khe. As the weather cleared and the ground dried, dust became a major problem, both for ground driving and construction, and landing and take off of aircraft. Many solutions were attempted, but

the one most readily available with the most promise was petroleum products. Heat casualties escalated, especially among newly assigned replacements, prompting the battalion to initiate an orientation program and increase on the job supervision.<sup>55</sup>

The first missing report occurs here, between May and July, and the next available one covers August through October 1966. At some point during this six month period, Lieutenant Colonel John R. Redman became the Battalion Commander, and the battalion experienced a 100% turnover in personnel, including the attached 511th Engineer Company (Panel Bridge) and one Platoon from the 630th Engineer Company (Light Equipment). Construction efforts in support of the 1st Cavalry Division at An Khe continued with very little tactical activity in the area. Major successes included continued efforts on the division logistical complex, construction of a perimeter security system consisting of 374 light poles, 80 miles of wire, and 66 guard towers, completion of a 140 bed surgical hospital, and construction of airstrips at Van Canh, and Vinh Thanh, and "the worlds largest heliport." Transportation of materials and supplies continued to divert engineer effort from engineer missions, as did shortages of specific construction materials and equipment repair parts.<sup>56</sup>

By the end of January 1967, the battalion had completed construction of a 60-ton capacity ice plant with associated water supply and purification system, over 40,000 cubic feet of refrigerated storage area, 9,216 square feet of maintenance buildings, and a 27-meter Eiffel bridge<sup>57</sup> which opened up the Kanack road linking An Khe to nearby hamlets. A temporary intermediate pier, constructed from Bailey bridge

panels, assisted in launching the bridge. The battalion also resurfaced the old An Khe airfield runway, taxiway, and parking apron with asphalt and fought the effects of a major ten year design flood. The flood, lasting between 25 and 27 November 1966, necessitated clearing of culverts and bridge piers, construction of dikes, constructing lanes through flooded areas of roads, maintenance of roads, and recovery of vehicles. The battalion assumed responsibility for all rock production in the An Khe area on 14 December 1966, supervising eight crushers in two local quarries. The lack of repair parts and qualified maintenance personnel made this a challenging operation. Company B, 84th Engineer Battalion (Construction), attached on 14 December 1966, and a dump truck platoon from the 585th Engineer Company (Dump Truck), attached the next day, joined the battalion along with the 511th Company and the platoon from the 630th Company. Construction materials were now arriving on through-put transportation assets, enhancing construction operations. The 70th Battalion continued to emphasize civic action programs, continuing to employ local nationals and distribute foodstuffs and used clothing. Although it added twice weekly English classes to the agenda, the battalion reduced sick call visits within the refugee resettlement area to two times a week.<sup>58</sup>

The battalion changed command by 10 May 1967, with Lieutenant Colonel Philip D. Sellers replacing Lieutenant Colonel Redmon, and appears to have settled into something of a routine. The first documented battalion mission statement appears here.

To command assigned and attached units.

To plan and coordinate operations of units assigned or attached to the battalion.

To provide all non-divisional engineer support required for tactical operations in the battalion area of responsibility.

To serve as the construction agency for all army troop labor construction projects within the battalion area of responsibility.

To act as point of contact for, and to maintain liaison with the Director of Construction, Qui Nhon, Regional Officer in Charge of Construction in An Khe and to provide a contracting officer's representative on army contracts as assigned by higher headquarters.

To act as a counterattack force to restore the integrity of the Camp Radcliff barrier in the event the barrier is penetrated by an enemy force.<sup>59</sup>

The unit still supported the 1st Cavalry Division at the base camp, now referred to as Camp Radcliff, near An Khe and there were no changes to the battalion task organization. The battalion reported high morale and an increasing sense of productivity after a frustrating monsoon season. Movies were shown five nights a week at the camp, television was available from Qui Nhon and officer, NCO, and EM clubs provided nightly "relaxation areas for unit personnel." Construction emphasis expanded from strictly combat support projects, to projects that included a 20 room billeting complex "to house the females of Camp Radcliff," a billeting complex for the field grade staff officers of the division, and a maintenance facility for battalion equipment.<sup>60</sup>

Operation ESSAYONS became the first tactical combat mission of the 70th Battalion in Vietnam, as the battalion reorganized as infantry to provide tactical route security of National Route 19 on an unspecified date prior to 10 March 1967. OPCON to the 3rd Brigade of the 1st Cavalry Division, the Battalion Headquarters and three line companies were responsible for "securing ten key bridges . . . occupying

numerous observation posts during daylight hours and one isolated post on a 24-hour basis, conducting four patrols daily . . . establishing listening posts and ambush points during the hours of darkness . . . assuring the smooth flow of traffic . . . [and] maintaining liaison with boundary units." The 72 hour mission allowed the division to divert the infantry unit normally employed on the mission, to conduct an air assault and search and clear operation. A second operation, MARAUDER, was a one day effort conducted on 10 March 1967 to clear the Camp Radcliff perimeter out to 4000 meters. The combat forces for this operation included two line companies from the battalion and four other companies attached to the 70th from other units on the base camp. No contact or casualties were reported for either operation.<sup>61</sup>

On 13 May 1967, the 70th Battalion attached the rest of the 630th Engineer Company (Light Equipment) and detached the platoon from the 585th Engineer Company (Dump Truck) on 15 May. The battalion changed from Table of Organization and Equipment 5-35D, to the newer version of 5-35E on 12 June 1967, adding Company D and increasing the authorized strength from 619 to 794. Movies at the base camp averaged six nights a week at three separate locations within the battalion by August 1967. The officer, NCO and enlisted clubs opened nightly and clubs often hired "commercial entertainment for evening performances." The battalion led two additional MARAUDER operations between May and August 1967, both of the same duration with the same intent and results as the first. Otherwise, the unit continued to function more as a construction battalion than a combat engineer battalion. Combat support construction missions continued in and around An Khe and the 1st Cavalry

Division base camp, as did quality of life projects for the camp, and the local Vietnamese civilians. During the fall of 1967, the battalion supervised the construction of a cinder block school in the hamlet of An Tan, outside of An Khe. Initiated with a \$3600 grant from the Waynesville Evangelical Church of Waynesville, Ohio, the battalion provided the supervision and some scrap material and the local civilians provided most of the labor and material.<sup>62</sup>

By November 1967, the 70th Battalion had a new Battalion Commander, Lieutenant Colonel Robert E. Ayers. The unit moved from An Khe to Pleiku in October 1967, detaching all units but the 634th Engineer Company (Light Equipment) and ending the support role to the 1st Cavalry Division on 10 October. The battalion remained assigned to the 937th Engineer Group and apparently joined it, occupying and improving the base camp named Engineer Hill. Construction of facilities continued, but a subtle shift in missions began focusing more attention on road maintenance, bridge operations, mine clearing, and security enhancements for fixed installations, including Engineer Hill. Quality of life evidently suffered little in the move, with movies shown six nights a week at two battalion locations, officer, NCO, and enlisted clubs open seven days a week, and radio and television available. The move also brought a revised battalion mission statement:

To command assigned and attached units.

To plan and coordinate operations of units assigned or attached to the battalion.

To provide all non-divisional engineer support required for tactical operations in the battalion area of responsibility.

To actively maintain the battalion sector of the Engineer Hill perimeter and to defend this sector against enemy attack.<sup>63</sup>



By February 1968, unit reports reflected the unease brought about by the Tet offensive. Security became a visible concern as the leaders stressed "constant surveillance of all local hire Vietnamese employees," and civic action efforts ceased. Increased enemy activity touched the battalion on 20 January 1968, when the 408th Sapper Battalion attacked the Engineer Hill base camp, "penetrating the perimeter wire in the vicinity of the 630th Engineer Company (Light Equipment) motor pool." Explosives damaged several pieces of equipment before the attack was repelled with nine enemy killed and two captured. Neither the 70th and 630th suffered casualties. Construction efforts also refocused on combat support missions, with priority going to land clearing operations along area roads, improvement of area runways, mine clearing, and engineer support to area combat forces. The battalion prepared artillery gun and vehicle survivability positions, earthen revetments, and field fortifications for several units including 2/1, 1/10, and 3rd ARVN Cavalry Squadrons, elements of the 52nd Artillery Group, the Special Forces camp at Poley Kleng, elements of the 1st Cavalry Division, and Project Delta. Company C (-), under temporary control of the 299th Engineer Battalion, constructed a 240-foot Double-Single Bailey bridge across the Dak To river that opened for traffic on 15 December 1967. The bridge replaced an existing M4T6 float bridge<sup>64</sup> of the 4th Engineer Battalion, 4th Infantry Division. One platoon from Company C deployed to Ban Me Thuot on 25 January 1968, where it defended the airfield during the Tet Offensive. "The platoon was equipped to accomplish directed projects in the area plus limited operational

support." Other construction projects continued throughout the battalion area of responsibility when the tactical situation allowed.<sup>65</sup>

Lieutenant Colonel C.G. Willard had assumed command of the battalion by 30 April 1968, as enemy activities, including ambushes, minings and demolition of roads, continued to increase, and increased engineer efforts were required to properly support tactical units and maintain area roads. As a result, battalion units "were spread throughout II Corps, D Company at Soui Doi Firebase on Rt 19, C Company at Ban Me Thuet, A Company on a classified mission and, at the beginning of the quarter, B Company at Polei Kleng." Spartan living conditions were dramatically worse than what the unit had grown accustomed to at An Khe and Pleiku. Efforts to improve the new camps began immediately, but combat engineer missions supporting area combat units took precedence for all elements of the battalion.<sup>66</sup>

The next missing set of reports occur here, between 30 April 1968 and January 1969, the next available one covering the period from February through April 1969. At some point during this missing nine month period, Lieutenant Colonel Robert K. O'Connell became the Battalion Commander, the 131st Engineer Company (Light Equipment) was attached, and all other units were detached. The First Platoon of the 509th Engineer Battalion (Float Bridge) was the last to leave on 16 March 1969. The 70th Battalion had been reassigned to the 35th Engineer Group from the 937th, the Battalion Headquarters and Headquarters Company, Companies C and D relocated to Camp Jerome at Ban Me Thuot, Company B and the 131st Company relocated to Hot Rocks Quarry, and Company A moved to Khanh Duong. Nonjudicial punishment within the

battalion had significantly increased from previous reports, although the unit morale reportedly remained high. By this time, all members of the battalion lived in "living/fighting bunkers," improving overall living conditions and substantial progress had been made installing a perimeter lighting system and guard towers, easing guard duty requirements. Civic action projects had resumed and the last line of the battalion mission statement changed to "actively maintain a perimeter defense at all base camp and job sites occupied by the battalion or subordinate units, and to defend assigned perimeters against enemy attack." Combat engineer missions continued to command the majority of battalion operations, many in response to enemy attacks and sabotage operations. Conventional construction missions began taking on a low visibility, defensive nature, highlighted by the underground emergency medical facility constructed by Company C and the construction of numerous bunker complexes and defensive enhancements to base camps. The dispersed units, civic action projects, combat engineering focus, and base camp enhancement efforts became the pattern of the battalion until it consolidated and prepared for redeployment to the U.S. in November.<sup>67</sup>

Between April and July 1969, Lieutenant Colonel James E. Hays assumed command of the battalion, holding the position until 31 October 1969, when the Executive Officer, Major Richard E. Works assumed temporary command. Lieutenant Colonel James McKnight assumed command upon his arrival on 7 November 1969. By October 1969, the battalion had been notified of the scheduled November redeployment to the U.S. and subsequent inactivation. The 131st Engineer Company (Light Equipment)

detached from the battalion and redeployed on 1 September 1969, being replaced by the First Platoon 630th Engineer Company (Light Equipment). Company A moved to Camp Jerome, Ban Me Thuot, from Khanh Duong on 31 October as part of the battalion redeployment preparations. The battalion announced the redeployment news on 8 October, with an immediate positive impact on unit morale.<sup>68</sup>

A convoy from Company B suffered an ambush on Route QL 14, on 2 November, wounding the Company Commander and causing his immediate evacuation. Civic action efforts stopped on 1 November, and on 6 November the primary focus of the battalion became the "teardown of Camp Jerome, the turn-in of equipment and the preparation for the transfer of men and equipment to Hot Rocks quarry to constitute Task Force 21." The battalion transferred all remaining projects to the 864th Engineer Battalion (Construction) and Task Force 21 on 19 November. The First Platoon, 630th Engineer Company (Light Equipment) detached from the battalion on 24 November and rejoined the 630th Company as part of the 45th Engineer Group. By the time the battalion actually departed Vietnam for the U.S., unit strength had dropped to 10 officers and 315 enlisted men out of an authorized 36 officers, 3 warrant officers, and 665 enlisted men.<sup>69</sup>

These Operation and Command Reports represent a great deal of detail about the 70th Battalion in Vietnam, but focuses mostly on technical aspects of missions and lack most of the human side of the story. Except for the last report that mentions the Company B ambush and the wounding of the Company Commander, there is absolutely no mention of casualties, accidental or combat related, anywhere in the

four years worth of reports that were available. Troop entertainment options are mentioned, but there is no note of any type of unit historical property or customs and traditions. The reports, as so much of the heritage maintained by the Army preservation system and institutions, are dry and sterile, with few hints about the humor, heroism, camaraderie, pride, or fears of the soldiers that make up a unit and forge its collective personality. While the human perspective, which transforms history into heritage, is missing for the events throughout this period, the amount of information preserved about the battalion in Austria, Germany, and Fort Campbell, is extremely sketchy and represents the most substantial "hole" in the basic history of the unit. Once again, we must turn to sources outside of what is normally thought of as the "system," if we are going to define the history or flesh out the missing heritage any further.

#### Heritage From Outside the System

##### Published External Sources

The first information obtained from external sources was again from publications that mentioned the unit in passing, or made references to the type of unit. It is here, that the place of the 70th Engineer Battalion in the larger context of the Vietnam War becomes visible. The battalion was "originally alerted for possible deployment in August 1964, [and] the battalion spent the next year as a 'One-Buck' unit--a code designation applied by the Continental Army Command which required the battalion to be in readiness for deployment on 48 hour notice."<sup>70</sup> By the time the actual deployment order was received, most of the key

positions were filled and the staff had worked together for almost a year. Personnel problems during the deployment were minimal due to the long readiness period. Battalion equipment moved to the port of Mobile, Alabama, on 15 July for shipment "aboard one of the new Lykes automated freighters."

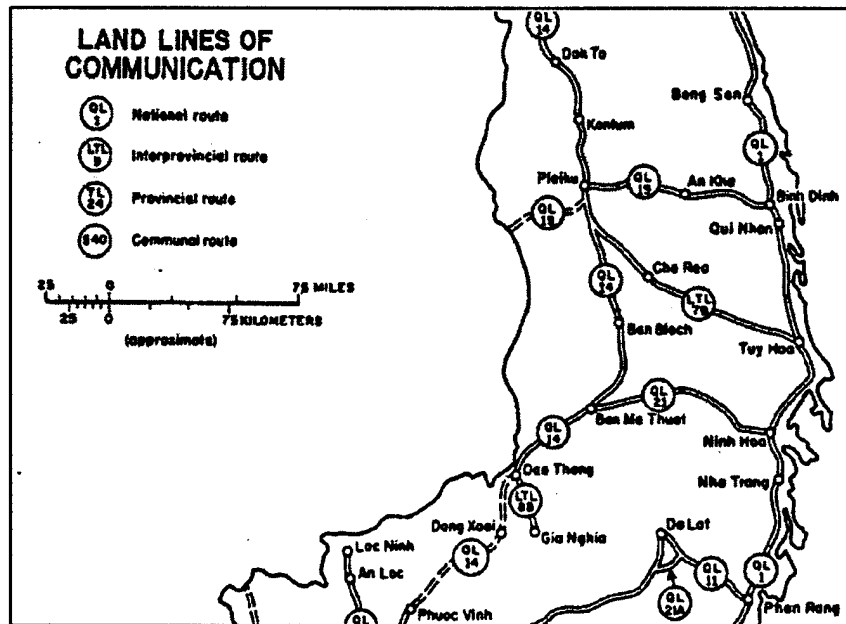


Figure 18. 70th Engineer Battalion operating area during the Vietnam war. Source: Reprinted from Robert R. Ploger, U.S. Army Engineers, 1965-1970 (Washington: Department of the Army, 1974), 165.

Upon arrival in Vietnam, the battalion advance party, with help from the 84th Engineer Battalion (Construction) had positioned the battalion equipment in staging areas on the beach, facilitating linkup and organization for operations when the battalion personnel arrived. "The 70th, which arrived at Qui Nhon on 23 August, was the first

engineer combat battalion in the Republic of Vietnam,"<sup>71</sup> and soon "established itself as the Workhorse of the 937th Group."<sup>72</sup> The battalion immediately made its presence known by preparing facilities and infrastructure for the newly formed and deploying 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile). Although the operational reports indicate the battalion apparently supported the 1st Cavalry with base camp construction only during this period, a quick review of the unique heritage and initial division combat operations, facilitated by the 70th efforts, is worthwhile to see how the battalion fit into the larger picture.

The origins of the Airmobile 1st Cavalry Division itself provides an interesting unit heritage vignette. When the Army decided to test the Airmobile concept in 1963, it reactivated the 11th Airborne Division at Fort Benning, Georgia, and redesignated it as the 11th Air Assault (Test) Division. Included were several battalion sized units of the 2nd Infantry Division, attached to the 11th for the tests. Conducted in 1964, the tests "showed conclusively that the division's elements could seek out an enemy over a very wide area, find him, and then rapidly bring together the necessary firepower and troops to destroy him." "In a low intensity war, the division would be ideally suited for controlling large sectors . . . ." On 16 June 1965, the Secretary of Defense announced that the Army was authorized an airmobile division and that the 1st Cavalry Division would carry the colors. The announcement was surprising since the 1st Cavalry had been on active duty in Korea since 1957! Under the reorganization plan, the 2nd Infantry Division was inactivated in the U.S. and activated in Korea as

the 1st Cavalry inactivated in Korea. Then the 11th Air Assault Division was inactivated at Fort Benning and the 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile) was activated.<sup>73</sup>

On 28 July 1965 the division received deployment orders to Vietnam to blunt enemy efforts "to cut South Vietnam in two along the Pleiku-An Khe-Quy Nhon axis" in the II Corps tactical zone.<sup>74</sup> The advance liaison planning detachment of 32 personnel deployed on 2 August.<sup>75</sup> The division advance party of 1,030 soldiers and 152 tons of cargo followed 12 days later, arriving at Cam Ranh Bay and flying to An Khe where work had already begun on the division base camp. The remainder of the division left the U.S. by ship on 15 August, arriving at Quy Nhon harbor on 13 September and becoming fully operational in Vietnam on 28 September. The 1st Cavalry, the first complete U.S. division to arrive in Vietnam, immediately engaged in combat operations.<sup>76</sup>

When two North Vietnamese Army (NVA) regiments threatened to overrun the key Special Forces camp of Plei Me, 35-miles south of Pleiku, a strong South Vietnamese relief column smashed through an anticipated ambush and forced the NVA to withdraw. As the 70th Engineer Battalion continued to construct the division base camp, the 1st Cavalry Division received orders to "pursue, seek out and destroy the enemy." Concentrating first on the trail NVA regiment, "North Vietnamese regulars were routed from their hiding places, hounded and pursued, fragmented and destroyed in terrain they had believed would be their protector." "Nothing in their background or training had prepared them to cope with the full effects of an unleashed airmobile pursuit."<sup>77</sup>



Focus then shifted to the lead NVA regiment that had moved into the Ia Drang valley area where another fresh regiment had just arrived. The 1st Cavalry air assaulted the 3rd Brigade into the middle of the enemy forces on 14 November and launching a bitter three day battle as the two NVA regiments tried to overrun the perimeter. Withdrawing by air and ground on 17 November, B-52 bombers were used for close in air strikes against the enemy. The battle resumed when one of the battalions moving on the ground collided with an NVA battalion moving to the same location, referred to as Albany by the division.<sup>78</sup>

Mere words never can convey the agony that was Albany that afternoon, where two well-armed, determined and aggressive forces fell upon each other in a dense jungle; where friend and foe were intermingled; where it was rifleman against rifleman.<sup>79</sup>

In a total period of 35 days the 1st Cavalry Division had destroyed two regiments of an NVA division and accounted for 3,561 NVA soldiers killed and 157 captured. The division had inflicted the first ever major defeat on the North Vietnamese Army, validated the Airmobile concept, and established their presence in the Vietnam war. Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara called the operation an "unparalleled achievement" and in October 1966, the 1st Cavalry Division and attached units, including the 70th Engineer Battalion, was awarded the Presidential Unit Citation in a White House ceremony.<sup>80</sup>

Publications from outside of the heritage preservation system also provide key insights into the nature and scope of the type of operations the 70th Battalion conducted. Tactical support, the type of engineer support the 70th primarily provided in Vietnam, consisted of base development, lines of communications construction, or operational

support. Base development and lines of communication (roads) construction is easily understood and involves basic engineer tasks. Operational support, especially in Vietnam, requires further explanation of the tasks and conditions involved.

Operational support applied more to divisional units than the corps combat battalions, but all combat engineers saw varying degrees of these types of missions. They consisted primarily of mine clearing, land clearing, and demolition operations. Mine clearing operations were monotonous, dangerous, and often repetitive. The engineer battalion assigned to the 1st Cavalry Division, for example, "had to check a twelve-mile stretch of road along Route 19 in the vicinity of An Khe every morning before troops or vehicles could be allowed to traverse it." Throughout the war sweeping operations "were conducted almost exclusively by teams of men traveling the miles of roadway on foot."<sup>81</sup>

Land clearing operations "gained wide acceptance as among the most effective tactical innovations of the war." In these efforts to clear dense vegetation, engineers "became the key elements in successful operations aimed at penetrating enemy strongholds, exposing main infiltration routes, denying areas of sanctuary, and opening major transportation routes to both military and civilian traffic." Engineers who conducted the clearing often did so with great pride. On many occasions, they "formed the vanguard of assault forces attacking heavily fortified enemy positions, while even under ordinary circumstances their use in clearing the jungle ahead of tactical security elements placed them routinely in a position of direct vulnerability to enemy action." The majority of casualties suffered during these operations were from

mines encountered during the clearing and from "mortar attacks on night defensive positions." Even nature added her own danger as swarms of bees "often brought clearing activity to a standstill," hospitalizing many soldiers. "Green smoke flares proved the best means for repulsing bees [and] no other color than green seemed effective."<sup>82</sup>



Figure 19. Example of land clearing operations along Vietnamese road.  
Source: Reprinted from Robert R. Ploger, U.S. Army Engineers, 1965-1970 (Washington: Department of the Army, 1974), 97.

Clearing jungle along roads and highways was of paramount importance to achieve not only military success, but successful economic growth and political stability of South Vietnam. "No road, no matter how well constructed, was of much value if enemy interdiction made the

use of it too hazardous." Removing vegetation for several hundred meters on either side of a roadway also removed the cover and concealment required for enemy ambushes. Side benefits included cleared and fertile land for farming and significant contributions to the overall pacification effort of South Vietnam.<sup>83</sup>

By making travel easier and safer, communication between the villages and the cities--socially, economically, and politically--was increased. New and better roads enabled the farmer to transport his products farther and faster. Goods from cities could reach more rural markets and thereby contribute to raising the standard of living in these areas.<sup>84</sup>

Demolition missions required engineer teams "to destroy enemy base camps, material, and tunnels." Again, this type of operational support mission in particular, was generally assigned to divisional engineer units. Engineers on these missions would either accompany infantry units to provide immediate response, or would remain on call in base camps and deploy by air to support sites as needed.<sup>85</sup>

Construction of friendly defensive positions, preparation of landing zones, and even limited infantry pure tasks, such as base camp and local security, ambushes, and patrolling also fell into the operational support category. Lines of communication maintenance straddled the definition between lines of communication construction and operational support. Maintenance for combat engineer battalions primarily meant repair and clearance. In an effort to impede movement of reinforcements, "prevent resupply of ammunition and other supplies, and minimize the use of U.S. and Free World forces mobile resources," the enemy routinely destroyed bridges and culverts with demolitions, established roadblocks, and emplaced minefields and booby traps. These

maintenance missions also tended to be repetitive in nature, with units conducting reconnaissance of area roads at first light, followed by alerting and moving engineer and security forces to the sight of the damage, and finally repairing the damage. In some cases, the damage done to specific sites or structures themselves was repetitive, with the same engineers repairing the same blown bridge at the same location several times.<sup>86</sup>

Nonsystem publications also enhanced the battalion command picture for the battalion during Vietnam, providing a listing names and dates for all of the unit Commanders, except for the temporary command of Major Richard E. Works in early November 1969, and Lieutenant Colonel James McKnight, who assumed command as the battalion readied itself for redeployment.<sup>87</sup> Order of Battle publications also provide an encapsulated history of the battalion and higher headquarters, a superb starting point for initial research.<sup>88</sup>

#### Unpublished External Sources

As in the previous two chapters, the final sources of information came from individuals, primarily former members of the 70th Battalion. This information, while not as detailed and conceivably not as accurate, remains the best source for the human perspective. Colonel (Retired) Raymond M. Clock, Commander of the 70th Engineer Combat Battalion in Austria, provided many key details missing from both system and published nonsystem sources. He commanded the battalion from the early part of 1951, soon after it activated, and left in the first half of 1952. The battalion reactivated as part of an Army attempt to

convert occupation forces to tactical units and assimilated various construction and installation support engineers throughout Austria, previously under control of the U.S. Forces, Austria Engineer. The newly activated battalion, initially consisting of the Headquarters and Service Company and Company A, supported an equally new U.S. Forces, Austria, tactical command, essentially a reinforced regimental combat team, commanded by Brigadier General James C. Fry. When the "battalion" reactivated, the soldiers at Zell-Am-See were quartered in a lake-side hotel, the officers in another smaller hotel. The equipment, motor pool and maintenance facilities were located "at a small aircraft field about two miles from town."

Clock confirmed the activation and training of Companies B, C, and D, at Fort Bragg, and disclosed that two additional companies, the 531st and 532nd Engineer Companies, were trained in the U.S. and attached to the battalion in mid-1951. The primary missions of the battalion were war related demolitions and the earth moving phase of the construction of Camp Roeder, near Salzburg. The camp was to support several thousand troops as part of the U.S. Forces, Austria, consolidation to three bases at Salzburg, Vienna, and Linz. Clock, who was succeeded by Lieutenant Colonel Al Frolich, then Lieutenant Colonel Allen Jensen, remembers the battalion wearing the U.S. Forces, Austria, shoulder patch and the same unit crest identified by the Institute of Heraldry. He recalls the former Commander of Headquarters and Service Company was Joseph K. Bratton, who later became Chief of Engineers, and does not remember any unit mottoes, nicknames, customs, traditions, or property. In 1957, Clock commanded the 937th Engineer Group at Fort

Campbell, Kentucky, when the 70th Battalion redeployed from Europe to join the group, assigned to XVIII Airborne Corps. The battalion Commander at the time of the redeployment was a Lieutenant Colonel Caldwell, succeeded shortly afterwards by Major John Kopf.<sup>89</sup>

Vito V. Saravino, a former Lieutenant and Platoon Leader of the 70th Battalion and 532nd Company, joined the battalion with the companies at Fort Bragg. He recalls the battalion supporting a Regimental Combat Team of 10 to 12 thousand soldiers, whose mission was to delay any potential attacks from the Soviet Union, who might try taking advantage of U.S. preoccupation with the war in Korea.<sup>90</sup>

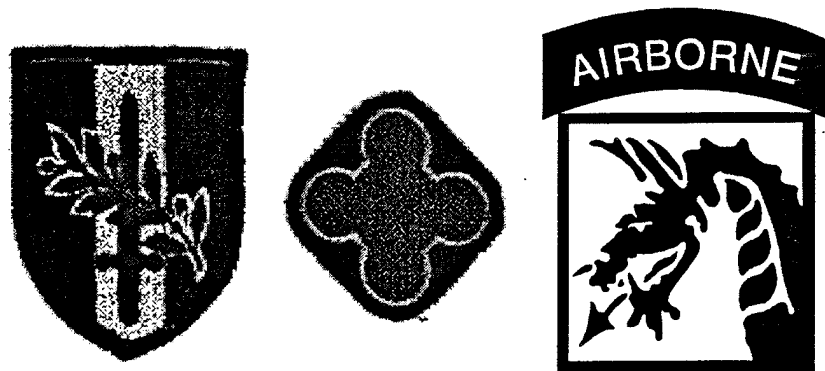


Figure 20. Shoulder patches of U.S. Forces, Austria, worn from 1949 to 1952; and Tactical Command, U.S. Forces, Austria, worn from 1952 to 1955. and XVIII Airborne Corps, worn from 1958 to 1965 by soldiers of the 70th Engineer Battalion. Source: Reprinted from Richard W. Smith and Roy A. Pelz, Shoulder Sleeve Insignia of the U.S. Army, 1946-1976 (Evansville, IN: University of Evansville Press, 1978), 39 and 60; Federal Clip Art: Premier I-Army CD-ROM (Annandale, VA: One Mile Up, Inc., 1994).

Colonel (Retired) Leonard Edelstein, assumed command of the battalion at Fort Campbell in November 1964. He confirms the "One Buck" status of the battalion, and the fact it was the first nondivisional

combat engineer battalion deployed to Vietnam. Edelstein explained the 1st Cavalry Division Landing Zone at An Khe was known as the "Golf Course," because the Assistant Division Commander, Brigadier General Wright, told Edelstein at the start of the construction project, "When finished, I want it to look like a golf course." According to Edelstein, the battalion initially wore the U.S. Army, Vietnam (USARV), shoulder patch in Vietnam, then switched to the 18th Engineer Brigade. Here, for the first time, the battalion is reported to have assumed a nickname--"Kodiaks." The exact origin and first use of the nickname is undocumented, but one can speculate that the 70th Battalion looked to its origins as the 2nd Battalion, 35th Regiment, and its work on the ALCAN Highway in World War II. According to Edelstein, the "Kodiaks" nickname was already in use when he assumed command at Fort Campbell.<sup>91</sup>

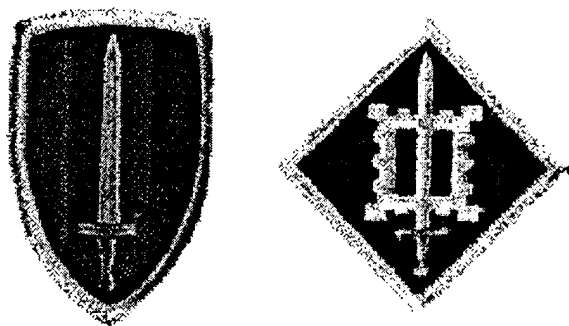


Figure 21. Shoulder patches of the U.S. Army, Vietnam, and the 18th Engineer Brigade. Source: Reprinted from Richard W. Smith and Roy A. Pelz, Shoulder Sleeve Insignia of the U.S. Army, 1946-1976 (Evansville, IN: University of Evansville Press, 1978), 38 and 59, 33 and 51.

Colonel (Retired) Don Siebenhaler was the first officer replacement in the 70th Battalion in Vietnam, arriving in October 1965,



and commanded Company B for a year. He also confirms use of the "Kodiaks" nickname.<sup>92</sup>

Brigadier General (Retired) Paul Chinen, joined the 70th Battalion as the Battalion S-2 in December 1965 in Vietnam, becoming the Commander of Company C in August 1966. During his tour with the battalion, the unit was located next to the 8th Engineer Battalion, 1st Cavalry Division, with operations "from An Khe to Pleiku (Highway 19, the Street Without Joy) and from An Khe back to the coast of Qui Nhon." He remembers the Company C motto was "Can Do!," but contrary to the chain of command indicated by the Operational Report for that period, he recalls the shoulder patch of the battalion was that of the 20th Engineer Brigade. He does not remember any traditions, customs, or historical unit properties.<sup>93</sup>

Arnie Jacobson joined the battalion at Pleiku in 1968 as a supply clerk, but became a combat engineer soon after. He remembered two members of the battalion being killed at Pleiku and explained his company built an airstrip north of the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ), a possible explanation to the "classified mission" mentioned in the 30 April 1968 Command Report. Unfortunately, he had no further details on the mission.<sup>94</sup>

Colonel (Retired) Robert K. O'Connell, commanded the battalion from 28 September 1968, to 25 June 1969, and provides the most revealing insight to the practice of unit heritage preservation in the field. When contacted for information on the history and heritage of the battalion, he acknowledged he really knew nothing about the unit, his predecessor had told him nothing and he had nothing to provide his

successor. He was unaware of the lineage and honors credited to the 70th Battalion until this interview, but did confirm the battalion was part of the 35th Engineer Group during his command. O'Connell now wishes he had paid more attention to the heritage of the battalion, but at the time, was "a little more concerned with guys running around trying to kill us than collecting and preserving history." He recalls the 131st Engineer Company, attached to the battalion, was an Army Reserve unit from Burlington, Massachusetts, that made the hometown papers, allegedly for not being properly employed. He did not remember any historically significant property, but did recall being inducted as an honorary member of the Montagnard tribe, drinking a locally concocted brew and receiving three copper rings, or bracelets, that he still owns, symbolizing his membership in the tribe. The battalion was evidently on very good terms with the local population of Ban Me Thuot, as the Viet Cong had inflicted severe hardships and damage to the village when they had last captured it. On the negative side, he was constantly concerned with drug use by battalion soldiers, something mentioned nowhere in the Operational/Command Reports.<sup>95</sup>

Colonel (Retired) James E. Hays, was the last "Combat Commander" of the 70th Battalion in Vietnam and provided the first physical link with the battalion of the past. Assuming command on 25 June 1969, Hays left the battalion on 31 October, days before the final preparations for redeployment. When he left, he took with him a 1 October 1969 copy of the battalion newsletter, the EXPRESS, "Ban Me Thuot's Only Engineering Newspaper," several editions of the Castle Courier, the Engineer Troops Vietnam publication, that contained

articles on the 70th, and a battalion color, or unit flag. The flag was damaged during a rocket attack on the battalion base at Camp Jerome and a new flag was procured to replace it. As a departure gift, the members of the battalion presented the damaged flag to Hays, who has preserved it since. The new flag was theoretically returned to Fort Lewis with the battalion and stored when the battalion inactivated in November 1969. Unfortunately, the Army has no record of the flag at the inactivation and it appears to have been lost. Colonel Hays not only returned his flag to the reactivating 70th Battalion at Fort Riley, it and he, were an integral part of the reactivation ceremony. Invited to participate, Hays assumed the position in front of the formed battalion he had left over 20 years before, uncased the damaged flag from Vietnam to reactivate the battalion, then participated in a change of command ceremony where the flag was transferred to the incoming Commander. The flag is being restored and preserved now, added to the unit historical property records, and will soon take a place of honor, along with any other recovered property, displayed within the battalion.

#### Assessment

The history of the 70th Engineer Battalion is much more complete than that of the 2nd Battalion, 35th Regiment, or the 145th Battalion. Much of this is attributable to the documents preserved in the CMH, the MHI, the CARL, and again, to a lesser extent than previous periods, the personal efforts of individuals. In the past, individuals, proud of their association with their unit and the history making events they participated in, picked up the slack and captured pieces of unit

heritage for preservation. While this thesis has shown that the Army system for preserving unit heritage is flawed and inconsistent, it has also shown that the system is often supplemented by efforts of those same individuals, especially in adding valuable human dimensions to otherwise antiseptic history. This did not happen for the war in Vietnam, primarily due to the previously unheard of personnel rotation policies.

The policy of rotating individuals in and out of the war instead of units, tour lengths of one year duration, and the close deployment times of almost all of the engineer units to Vietnam, combined to ensure the 70th Battalion was not alone when it experienced a 100% turnover of personnel in late 1966. "The loss of so many seasoned men at approximately the same time threatened the operational expertise of many units." Engineer units tried several different types of fixes, but the most common solution was to authorize a temporary overstrength of ten percent for a battalion; shorten tour lengths of selected individuals by as much as one month to allow "the administrative load to be spread over at least two months;" voluntarily or involuntarily extending tours of about ten percent of the soldiers eligible for rotation; and interchange men with soldiers in other units "who had less Vietnam service in order to lessen the impact of the loss on any specific battalion."<sup>96</sup> This was the end of the cohesive organizations that had deployed to Vietnam the year before. From this point on, the Vietnam war was fought with an individuals frame of reference. The personnel policies, undefined front, antiwar sentiment, elusive enemy, and dense vegetation that prevented large scale unit

operations, combined to isolate individual soldiers and de-emphasize unit pride, unit cohesiveness, unit operations, and unit loyalty. Unit commanders, those charged with developing and maintaining stability, esprit and cohesion, spent less than a year in command. The average length of command for the 70th Engineer Battalion from December 1965 to October 1969 was less than seven months! As a result, pride in unit accomplishments suffered and efforts by individuals to preserve the transitory heritage of units in Vietnam substantially decreased. Without this type of supplemental preservation effort, flaws in the Army heritage preservation system appear even more visible.

When information from all sources is compiled and reviewed, it is evident that there are significant amounts of dry and detailed historical information on the battalion and its activities during large portions of the war. It is equally obvious that numerous large and significant holes still exist in the story, especially when the human perspective is considered. There are no records documenting the activities of the battalion for the period from the reactivation of the battalion in Austria, the move and period of service in Germany, and the time at Fort Campbell. There is a gap in the Vietnam Operational/Command Reports of almost a year. Missions, accomplishments, gains, and losses during both of these periods may be gone forever. The uncertainty over what records the National Archives should possess, what is actually available, and the unclear location and responsibility of all other documents dating from 1954, is a mystery. Again, there is no record of unit historical property at all, unbelievable when one considers the "natural" propensity of soldiers to collect and display

war trophies and to surround themselves with memorabilia. It is difficult to believe that in over six years in Austria, a year and a half in Germany, seven years at Fort Campbell, and four years in combat in Vietnam, the battalion collected nothing considered worthy of keeping, preserving or honoring. Contentions that the battalion had no certificates, photographs, plaques, trophies, letters of commendation or appreciation, are difficult to accept. Any customs and traditions that evolved during this period have also disappeared, understandable if they were not documented, even more so when even the basic lineage of the unit was not passed down to incoming battalion commanders. Something as simple as a list of the battalion commanders, themselves is missing. It is fortunate that Colonel Hays and the members of the 70th Battalion violated standing regulations prohibiting the presentation of unit colors to individuals, since that flag appears to be the only piece of unit historical or heraldic property that has survived. Once again, one has to wonder how much has been lost, if this amount of material can be reconstructed.

### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Statement of Service for the 70th Engineer Battalion, U.S. Army Center for Military History (Cited hereafter as CMH), n.d.

<sup>2</sup> CMH, letter to 1st Infantry Division, 4 November 1992.

<sup>3</sup> National Archives (Cited hereafter as NA), letter to author, 28 December 1992.

<sup>4</sup> Romana M. Danysh, Historian, CMH, interview with author, Washington, D.C., 9 November 1994.

<sup>5</sup> NA, letter to author, 17 November 1992.

<sup>6</sup> NA, letter to author, 25 November 1992.

<sup>7</sup> Department of the Army, General Orders No. 40, 21 September 1967.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Headquarters, United States Army, Vietnam, General Orders Number 2070, 6 May 1967.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Headquarters, United States Army, Vietnam, General Orders Number 4536, 6 September 1969.

<sup>13</sup> Headquarters, United States Army, Vietnam, General Orders Number 1564, 3 May 1969.

<sup>14</sup> 1st Engineer Battalion, letter to Total Army Personnel Command, 26 August 1992.

<sup>15</sup> Department of the Army, DA PAM 672-1, Unit Citation and Campaign Participation Credit Register (Washington: Government Printing Office, 6 July 1961).

<sup>16</sup> U.S. Army Military History Institute (Cited hereafter as MHI), letter to author, 22 September 1992.

<sup>17</sup> Conversation between Dr. Sommers, Archivist-Historian, MHI and LTC Chris Stewart, LDO-CAL, Carlisle Barracks, PA, 9 February 1995.

<sup>18</sup> Thomas B. Proffitt, Chief, Heraldic Services and Support Division, U.S. Army Institute of Heraldry, telephone interview with author, Fort Riley, KS, 12 August 1992.

<sup>19</sup> Office of the Quartermaster General, Heraldic Services Division, letter to Commanding Officer, 70th Engineer Combat Battalion, 13 February 1953, 70th Engineer Battalion file, CMH, Washington, D.C.

<sup>20</sup> Office of the Quartermaster General, Heraldic Services Division, letter to Commanding Officer, 70th Engineer Combat Battalion, 2 September 1960, 70th Engineer Battalion file, CMH, Washington, D.C.

<sup>21</sup> Heraldic term for "Silver." James A. Sawicki, Cavalry Regiments of the United States Army (Dumfries, Virginia: Wyvern Publications, 1985).

<sup>22</sup> Taken from Fleur-de-lis, a heraldic device composed of a stylized three-petaled iris flower, once used as the armorial emblem of French sovereigns. Anne H. Soukhanov, ed., Webster's II New Riverside University Dictionary (Boston: Riverside Publishing Company, 1988). Presumably, a "field of lilies."

<sup>23</sup> Heraldic definition for the "red diagonal arch," literally "diagonal arch red." Sawicki, Cavalry Regiments.

<sup>24</sup> Office of the Quartermaster General, Heraldic Services Division, letter to Commanding Officer, 70th Engineer Combat Battalion, 13 February 1953, 70th Engineer Battalion file, CMH, Washington, D.C.; Office of the Quartermaster General, Heraldic Services Division, letter to Commanding Officer, 70th Engineer Combat Battalion, 2 September 1960, 70th Engineer Battalion file, CMH, Washington, D.C.

<sup>25</sup> Adjutant General's Office, Department of the Army, letter, 15 March 1949, 70th Engineer Battalion file, CMH, Washington, D.C.

<sup>26</sup> General Orders Number 24, Headquarters, United States Forces in Austria, 25 March 1949, 70th Engineer Battalion file, CMH, Washington, D.C.

<sup>27</sup> CMH, Unit Record of Service, n.d., 70th Engineer Battalion file, CMH, Washington, D.C.

<sup>28</sup> General Orders Number 32, Headquarters, United States Forces in Austria, 11 April 1949, 70th Engineer Battalion file, CMH, Washington, D.C.

<sup>29</sup> CMH, Unit Record of Service, n.d., 70th Engineer Battalion file, CMH, Washington, D.C.

<sup>30</sup> Adjutant General's Office, Department of the Army, letter, 16 January 1951, 70th Engineer Battalion file, CMH, Washington, D.C.

<sup>31</sup> Headquarters, 522nd Engineer Service Battalion, letter, 1 February 1951, 70th Engineer Battalion file, CMH, Washington, D.C.



<sup>32</sup> Adjutant General's Office, Department of the Army, letter, 16 January 1951, 70th Engineer Battalion file, CMH, Washington, D.C.

<sup>33</sup> Headquarters, 522nd Engineer Service Battalion, letter, 1 February 1951, 70th Engineer Battalion file, CMH, Washington, D.C.

<sup>34</sup> CMH, Unit Record of Service, n.d., 70th Engineer Battalion file, CMH, Washington, D.C.

<sup>35</sup> Adjutant General's Office, Department of the Army, letter, 23 May 1953, 70th Engineer Battalion file, CMH, Washington, D.C.

<sup>36</sup> CMH, Unit Record of Service, n.d., 70th Engineer Battalion file, CMH, Washington, D.C.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> Historical Division, Special Staff, letter to Commanding Officer, 70th Engineer Combat Battalion, 12 July 1949, 70th Engineer Battalion file, CMH, Washington, D.C.

<sup>39</sup> Historical Division, Special Staff, letter to Commanding Officer, 70th Engineer Combat Battalion, 18 November 1949, 70th Engineer Battalion file, CMH, Washington, D.C.

<sup>40</sup> Office of the Chief of Military History, letter to Office of the Quartermaster General, 21 December 1950, 70th Engineer Battalion file, CMH, Washington, D.C.

<sup>41</sup> Headquarters, 70th Engineer Combat Battalion, letter, 19 May 1951, 70th Engineer Battalion file, CMH, Washington, D.C.

<sup>42</sup> Engineer Historical Division, Office of the Chief of Engineers, letter to Office of the Chief of Military History, 31 May 1951, 70th Engineer Battalion file, CMH, Washington, D.C.

<sup>43</sup> Office of the Chief of Military History, letter to Commanding Officer, 70th Engineer Combat Battalion, 24 September 1951, 70th Engineer Battalion file, CMH, Washington, D.C.

<sup>44</sup> Headquarters, 522nd Engineer Service Battalion, letter, 19 May 1951, 70th Engineer Battalion file, CMH, Washington, D.C.

<sup>45</sup> Headquarters, 70th Engineer Combat Battalion, letter, 28 April 1953, 70th Engineer Battalion file, CMH, Washington, D.C.

<sup>46</sup> Office of the Chief of Military History, letter to Commanding Officer, 70th Engineer Combat Battalion, 25 May 1953, 70th Engineer Battalion file, CMH, Washington, D.C.

<sup>47</sup> Headquarters, 70th Engineer Combat Battalion, letter, 15 February 1964, 70th Engineer Battalion file, CMH, Washington, D.C.

<sup>48</sup> Office of the Chief of Military History, letter to Commanding Officer, 70th Engineer Combat Battalion, 9 March 1964, 70th Engineer Battalion file, CMH, Washington, D.C.

<sup>49</sup> Headquarters, 70th Engineer Combat Battalion, letter, 9 February 1966, 70th Engineer Battalion file, CMH, Washington, D.C.

<sup>50</sup> Office of the Chief of Military History, letter to Commanding Officer, 937th Engineer Group, 9 March 1964, 70th Engineer Battalion file, CMH, Washington, D.C.

<sup>51</sup> Romana M. Danysh, Historian, CMH, interview with author, Washington, D.C., 9 November 1994.

<sup>52</sup> Headquarters, 70th Engineer Combat Battalion, letter, 12 October 1965, Combined Arms Research Library (Cited hereafter as CARL), Fort Leavenworth, Kansas.

<sup>53</sup> Headquarters, 70th Engineer Combat Battalion, letter, 11 January 1966, CARL, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

<sup>55</sup> Headquarters, 70th Engineer Combat Battalion, letter, 7 May 1966, MHI, Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania.

<sup>56</sup> Headquarters, 70th Engineer Combat Battalion, letter, 31 October 1966, CARL, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas.

<sup>57</sup> An Eiffel bridge is constructed with Bailey bridge panels and differs from a traditional Bailey bridge in that "it lacks a launching system and the diagonal members can not withstand reverse stress." Headquarters, 70th Engineer Combat Battalion, letter, 31 January 1967, CARL, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas.

<sup>58</sup> Headquarters, 70th Engineer Combat Battalion, letter, 31 January 1967, CARL, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas.

<sup>59</sup> Headquarters, 70th Engineer Combat Battalion, letter, 10 May 1967, CARL, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

<sup>62</sup> Headquarters, 70th Engineer Combat Battalion, letter, 10 August 1967, CARL, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas.

<sup>63</sup> Headquarters, 70th Engineer Combat Battalion, letter, 14 November 1967, CARL, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas.

<sup>64</sup> A bridge system used in combat areas for wet gap crossings of heavy vehicles in support of river crossings or heavy division operations. It features a pneumatic float with an aluminum roadway composed of interlocking pieces (balk) which can be erected by hand. The M4T6 can be used to construct short lightweight dry gap bridges which can be preassembled and flown into the gap crossing site by helicopter. U.S. Army Engineer School, Combat Engineer Systems Handbook (Fort Leonard Wood, April 1991), 13.

<sup>65</sup> Headquarters, 70th Engineer Combat Battalion, letter, 31 January 1968, CARL, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas.

<sup>66</sup> Headquarters, 70th Engineer Combat Battalion, letter, 30 April 1968, CARL, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas.

<sup>67</sup> Headquarters, 70th Engineer Combat Battalion, letter, 30 April 1969, MHI, Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania.

<sup>68</sup> Headquarters, 70th Engineer Combat Battalion, letter, 31 October 1969, CARL, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas.

<sup>69</sup> Headquarters, 70th Engineer Combat Battalion, letter, 29 November 1969, CARL, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas.

<sup>70</sup> Robert R. Ploger, U.S. Army Engineers, 1965-1970 (Washington: Department of the Army, 1974), 33.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid., 75.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., 78.

<sup>73</sup> 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile), The 1st Air Cavalry Division: Vietnam August 1965 to December 1969 (Tokyo: DIA Nippon Printing Company, LTD., n.d.), 259.

<sup>74</sup> Ploger, U.S. Army Engineers, 75.

<sup>75</sup> 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile), The 1st Air Cavalry Division, 259.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid., 26.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid., 29.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid., 30.

<sup>81</sup> Ploger, U.S. Army Engineers, 91.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid., 95, 102.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid., 122.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid., 90.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid., 91, 125.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid., 223.

Lieutenant Colonel Leonard Edelstein	5 December 1964-17 July 1966
Lieutenant Colonel John R. Redman	17 July 1966-2 March 1967
Lieutenant Colonel Philip D. Sellers	2 March 1967-3 October 1967
Lieutenant Colonel Robert E. Ayers	30 October 1967-22 April 1968
Lieutenant Colonel Charles G. Willard	22 April 1968-28 September 1968
Lieutenant Colonel Robert K. O'Connell	28 September 1968-25 June 1969
Lieutenant Colonel James E. Hays	25 June 1969-31 October 1969

<sup>88</sup> Shelby L. Stanton, Vietnam Order of Battle (Washington: U.S. News Books, 1981).

<sup>89</sup> Raymond M. Clock, interview by Author, 12 November 1994, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas.

<sup>90</sup> Vito V. Saravino, telephone interview by Author, 28 September 1994, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas.

<sup>91</sup> Leonard Edelstein, interview by Author, 12 November 1994, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas.

<sup>92</sup> Don Siebenhaler, telephone interview by Author, 4 October 1994, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas.

<sup>93</sup> Paul Y. Chinen, interview by Author, 27 November 1994, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas.

<sup>94</sup> Arnie Jacobson, telephone interview by Author, 11 December 1992, Fort Riley, Kansas.

<sup>95</sup> Robert K. O'Connell, telephone interview by Author, 2 January 1995, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas.

<sup>96</sup> Ploger, U.S. Army Engineers, 130.

## CHAPTER 6

### CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The importance of unit heritage, combined with the Army's curse of cyclical activation and inactivation of units, demands an efficient and effective system to preserve the heritage of those Army units. Considering the evidence available for the 70th Engineer Battalion, the Army has clearly failed to preserve the heritage of the unit, because the system charged with preserving that heritage is inadequate. As with most complex issues, there is no single reason why the system failed, and no easy or quick solution to correct it.

In an ideal world, where unit heritage is of paramount importance, one can easily visualize an ideal preservation system. A single organization, the CMH, would have responsibility for the preservation of all aspects of history and unit heritage in the Army. In a much more centralized system, the CMH would not only have responsibility for establishing policies and procedures, but also enforcing standards. Army museums, the Institute of Heraldry, the Military History Institute, the Combined Arms Research Library, and all historical storage facilities would be assigned to the CMH for the purposes of a comprehensive and coordinated historical preservation effort. Unit records would no longer be transferred to the National Archives and out of Army control, but would be stored under the control and responsibility of the CMH. Historical property would no longer be

considered a supply responsibility to be handled and stored by supply personnel, but a historical function and the responsibility of the CMH. Heraldry and heraldic items, such as flags and guidons, would also fall under the purview of the CMH.

Quality, trained people, in sufficient quantities, would work in all organizations of the system. Limited manpower, time, money, and space would not be a factor in preserving unit heritage. A special branch, whose sole function is to assist units in the reconstruction and preservation of their heritage and enforce compliance with policies, would be assigned to the CMH.

Policies and standards defined by the CMH, would be established in a single Army Regulation that has always, and will always have the same number and title. The regulation would encompass all historical areas of interest and address unit heritage, unit heraldry, museums, and art. The regulation would require each separate company and battalion and higher headquarters to maintain unit heritage files with specific contents. In addition to once again requiring these units to submit an annual historical report to the CMH, every major exercise would prepare a written After Action Report (AAR) for the unit files. Unit Days, or Organizational Days would be requisite, semistructured events that would also require the preparation of an AAR with a copy forwarded to the CMH. Units would conduct an annual property assessment to identify items that have, or may have in the future, historical value and report results, completion, and accountability to the CMH. Documented customs, traditions, and ceremonies would be required additions to the heritage file. Another new and critical component of the files would be an

annually revised disposition plan that covered contingencies and assigned internal responsibilities for unit inactivation/redesignation, as well as emergency evacuation in case of natural disasters or hostile activity. In the event of a programmed inactivation or redesignation, the unit would also receive early disposition instructions for the unit heritage files and an inactivation transition team would be dispatched from the CMH to assist in the final collection, inventory, shipping, and storage. In the event of an activation, the transition team would contact the new unit, then collect and deliver the stored heritage files, ensuring accountability and reviewing significance with the new unit in the process.

The preservation regulation would clearly assign responsibilities for preservation of history and unit heritage at all levels and any changes required to enhance the system would be evolutionary in nature, not revolutionary. The regulation would add unit heritage files to the required list of inspectable items for all unit Emergency Deployment Readiness Exercises, Command Readiness Inspections, and Annual General Inspections. At least one member of each unit inspection team would be a representative from the CMH compliance branch. Failure of an inspection would be considered "Dereliction of Duty" and require correction or punishment, possibly nonjudicial. Superior programs would be recognized by the CMH as exceptional custodians of unit heritage, receiving appropriate certificates and bragging rights.

Knowledge and awareness of these regulatory requirements would be fully understood by every key player in the preservation effort.

Preservation requirements and techniques would be a standard task taught at every officer, warrant officer, and noncommissioned officer career course. Company commanders, first sergeants, and battalion commanders would receive a special block of heritage preservation instruction from the CMH prior to assuming their duties, that focused specifically on command responsibilities in the preservation effort and their unit legacy.

Finally, Army policies themselves would reflect the importance in unit heritage. Unit designations and affiliations would be fixed to promote stability and continuity. Divisional "packages," units that have historically been assigned to a specific division, would become inseparable once established. The inactivation or activation of a specific division would mean the inactivation or activation of every unit in that package, with exceptions based only upon changing technology or changes in organizational structure requirements. The regimental system would be much more than a "good idea." Soldiers assigned to a regiment would stay in that regiment for operational assignments as long as the rank structure allows. Commanders and senior noncommissioned officers would command units they were previously assigned to and developed in. Deployments and redeployments will be done as units, never again like Vietnam where individuals rotated through a unit and the war on a continuous basis.

This system is, of course, an unconstrained ideal with many unattainable "good ideas." In the real world, people, time, space, and other resources are limited and any changes to the current system must come from workable, realistic recommendations, based on solid



conclusions and drawn from observed deficiencies. The conclusions and recommendations presented here are based on the review of the Army preservation system and the results of the case study.

Thesis research indicates that inconsistency in the institutions, responsibilities, and implementation regulations over the last fifty years have introduced discrepancy, turmoil, and confusion into the preservation system. Chapter two highlighted how responsibility for history and historical preservation has shifted from a section within the Army War College, to the Army G-2, to a special staff office on the Army staff, and finally to what is now the Center for Military History. Regulations governing the preservation of unit history have evolved from two, relatively clear cut, mission oriented documents, to a plethora of regulations with different regulation numbers, slightly different and changing focuses, and multiple changes in the late 1940s and 1950s. The Army streamlined these in the early 1960s, modified them again in the 1970s, and somewhat stabilized them since then. The obvious difficulty, of course, is that unless someone in each unit was constantly and consistently abreast of all the of changes during the last fifty years, units could not know the current regulatory requirements and chances of compliance were slim. The Army must maintain continuity in the current institutions and regulations to reduce turmoil and enhance program stability, particularly during periods of war when units deploy and confusion and turmoil are a natural state of affairs.

The Army should refine the responsibilities and regulations as necessary, but not change regulation numbers or focus, unless it is to

revert back to a single, comprehensive, historical regulation. A comprehensive, clearly defined end state for the preservation of unit heritage must be included in all of the base preservation regulations. That end state, similar to a tactical operations order, needs to address what a successful unit heritage preservation program is, how to establish a successful program, the value of a successful program, and how to measure success. The ultimate successful program should provide a reactivating unit with a complete unit package with absolutely no loss of heritage.

The next conclusion is that institutions generally seem to preserve the material they receive, but in the majority of cases, the quantity or quality of the material they end up with is questionable. Institutions, like the CMH, MHI, CARL, and National Archives, preserve only what is turned over to them, and obviously, if the material does not enter the system, the system cannot preserve it. Conversely, the end result is the same if a unit does not provide the right type of material. Quantity does not necessarily include quality, although quantity itself increases the chances that something valuable may be preserved.

Ultimately, it is the individual unit that has the responsibility to collect, maintain, and properly forward its heritage as part of the inactivation process and the unit that must provide better products to the institutions for preservation. The success of this decentralized system, while allowing for the establishment of policy, responsibilities, and procedures from the top down, is at the mercy of the awareness, knowledge, initiative, and resources of each

unit on the bottom. It is the unit commander who is ultimately responsible for the preservation of the unit heritage. Unfortunately, policies, responsibilities, and procedures without awareness, interest, supervision, and enforcement will certainly fail.

Based on personal experience and an informal poll of current and former company and battalion commanders, there is little awareness of the unit historical preservation system in the field. If commanders, who are responsible to preserve the heritage of their unit, are unaware of the existence of the system, knowledge of policies, responsibilities, procedures, and their own duties, it is not surprising the decentralized bottom up preservation system is not successful. While military history is part of the curriculum of most Army career courses, they omit preservation of unit heritage and the preservation system. Since higher level commanders do not receive training in the policies, responsibilities, procedures during their developmental years, they do not have the knowledge, nor the historical sensitivity to teach subordinate commanders in the unit environment. As a result, any heritage preservation knowledge the average commander in the field possesses, is cursory at best, and usually encountered through coincidental exposure or personal interest in the area.

The Army must raise awareness of unit leaders in the field, sensitize them to the value and importance of unit heritage, and indoctrinate them into their roles and responsibilities as the "custodians of unit legacy." There are many ways to achieve this awareness, but all require action from the Army, mostly in the institutional educational system. Familiarization orientations at the

Officer Basic, Warrant Officer Candidate, and Advanced Noncommissioned Officer Courses, should be reinforced with additional familiarization instruction in the Officer Advanced Course and the Command and General Staff College. The real push must occur where the real responsibilities lie, in the battalion and brigade Precommand Courses and the Sergeants Major Academy, preparing unit commanders and senior noncommissioned officers for their upcoming responsibilities. Training time is always a premium, but fact sheets and copies of the basic regulations should be handed out as a minimum. Senior officers who visit the courses need to highlight the value of the preservation of unit heritage and reference the regulations, the basis of the preservation system.

Once in a unit, heritage preservation requires continued emphasis. Senior leaders, once educated and sensitized to the preservation of unit heritage, would be able to mentor and guide junior commanders in the pursuit and preservation of their own unit heritage. Most units usually have an officer assigned an extra duty as historical officer, but these are often extra duties in name only. There is no standardized education or training on duties and responsibilities. Senior officers, once sensitized, would provide guidance, but a formal training program would reap greater rewards. This unit historian training program could occur through a distributed learning package such as a correspondence course, or through contact training at the installation level, perhaps using staff members from local military museums. Either way, unit historians require certification in a standardized unit heritage preservation training program to truly standardize Army policies and procedures throughout the Army.

In addition to a unit commander's lack of familiarity with responsibilities, policies, and procedures of the Army unit historical preservation system, participation in preservation effort, although mandated by Army regulation, is essentially voluntary. Individual initiative is necessary to identify and locate applicable preservation regulations, identify responsibilities and requirements, identify and collect appropriate heritage material, maintain and display material during active periods of service, store and turn-in material during inactivations, then retrieve available material and reconstruct any missing pieces of heritage when a unit is reactivated. Since the current Army system is one without teeth or supervision, there are no penalties for commanders failing their assigned regulatory responsibilities and no independent agency to inspect for conformity.

Unfortunately, until a unit inactivates, then reactivates, there is no indication of how much emphasis a commander has placed on heritage or how well, or poorly, the heritage was preserved. The preservation system requires enforcement and penalties for failure if it is ever to be truly successful. Adding heritage preservation to the Command Readiness Inspection, Annual General Inspection, or Emergency Deployment Readiness Exercise programs would increase command emphasis on heritage, enhance standardization of preservation efforts and raise visibility to the Major Command level. Mobile training and inspection teams from the CMH, or teams from local military museums, could validate the enforcement system and report results to the Chief of Military History. Letters of concern, through the chain of command, to commanders of ineffective unit preservation efforts could follow. An

Army program to recognize and reward successes would also provide stimulus and interest in preservation efforts.

The decentralized system makes the institutions charged with preserving unit heritage reactive, with a tendency to wait for someone to feed material to them or contact them for information or assistance. None of the institutions, as a rule, push or feed instructions and assistance to inactivating units, or material and assistance to reactivating units. To increase productivity of the institutions, particularly the CMH as the lead heritage preservation agency of the Army, a transition is required from passive responsive roles into more active ones. Training, education, and enforcement programs are more complex examples, but other simpler options could provide immediate positive results.

For example, units activate and inactivate in accordance with Department of the Army and Major Command orders. Officers, charged with executing them, often receive these orders and have given no thought to restoration or preservation of unit heritage. An additional paragraph integrated into these orders, referencing the base heritage regulations and providing points of contact, could immediately sensitize intermediate commanders and provide a start point for action. Clarification of unit heritage file requirements in the regulations, to include specific turn-in instructions and checklist would enhance necessary preparations for inactivation. Publication of articles in professional journals would raise awareness in the field and bring much needed publicity to this whole issue.

An obvious restriction to the entire system is that resources at all levels fail to support a clearly defined and publicized desired end state. This is especially true during tumultuous and constricted periods that accompany periods of downsizing. Money, manpower, display capacity, storage capacity, time to collect, process, and maintain the heritage of a unit is often in direct competition with other operational requirements and resource realities and is just as applicable for the institutions charged with preserving the heritage of units, as it is the units themselves.

Without the unlikely increase in resources at all levels, the greatest potential gain is through increased efficiency of available unit resources. Units must realize that it is easier, and more efficient, to capture and preserve unit heritage as it develops than it is to reconstruct it. With the assistance of the instructions and checklist developed by the CMH on unit heritage files, units can develop "heritage collection plans," that focus their collection efforts and institutionalize the program. Units must not only determine what they will collect and preserve, they must also assign responsibility and check to ensure it is accomplished. Once the collection plan is established, junior personnel in all areas of the unit can assist in the collection effort since they will know what they need to preserve. Another option is to assign incoming junior Lieutenants the mission to research and document periods of unit heritage. This type program would indoctrinate officers as they come into the unit, establish command emphasis on unit heritage, enhance the incoming officers' research and

written communication skills, and most importantly, provide the unit with another permanent addition to the heritage of the unit.

In addition to conflicting with available resources, any clearly defined and desired end state also conflicts with daily operational realities within a unit. The preservation of heritage material naturally conflicts with mobilization and deployment operations, since the primary focus of any unit would be on the mobilization, deployment, and any potentially life threatening combat situations. One would think that all, or most key leaders in situations like that, would focus on movement preparations, and any attempt to preserve the heritage of a unit would pass to stay behind personnel. Ultimately, a situation could easily develop where stay behind personnel, with no knowledge of heritage regulatory requirements or disposition instructions, competing high priority mobilization support missions, and no key leaders to turn to, inherit the mission to preserve the heritage of a unit. Chances that the heritage will be properly collected, inventoried, packaged, and delivered to the appropriate preservation institution in these cases are very unlikely.

A similar situation is conceivable when a unit completes an action and focuses on redeployment and demobilization. The primary focus of a unit quickly turns to home, then the next mission. Any pieces of unit heritage developed or acquired during the action, especially if the unit is inactivating, is lost immediately with the dispersion of the unit or is turned over to another unit or organization, probably a nonparticipant in the recent action. Again, chances that a stay behind who has no appreciation for the value of the



material the heritage will properly collect, inventory, package, and deliver the material to the appropriate preservation institution are very unlikely. There are also conflicts with day to day priorities in units, whether the unit is in combat or peacetime garrison.

Combat focuses the unit on survival and the mission, with little time or inclination left over to collect, document, and maintain heritage material. Peacetime conflicts are primarily time and manpower, with few units ready to dedicate much of either to the preservation of unit heritage when daily demands and suspenses are staring them in the face. It is not surprising then, to conclude that the majority of any preserved heritage, lies in that which a unit most prolifically and routinely produces.

All inactivations and redesignations break the all-essential continuity, and every break increases the number of moving parts and chances of loss for all components of unit heritage. Inactivations and redesignations do not always make sense, even at the time they occur, but reasons are rarely documented and make the actions even harder to understand in future years. The CMH should prepare fact sheets documenting the background and environment causing the activation, inactivation or redesignation of a unit, include them in CMH files on that unit so the unit maintains a perspective of the world and national events that initiated the change in status. Additionally, units should plan on inactivation to ensure they have the best heritage package they possibly can for the unit when it reactivates.

The amount of time and effort a unit devotes to using the heritage it develops, the greater the chance that unit members will

consider the heritage of value and worthy of preservation. According to the CMH, the two instances that garner the most interest from the field are the activation and inactivation of units, when units seek out material and information to fill in ceremony programs. The implication is that heritage is not important otherwise, that the unit does not use or live the heritage nor use the multiplier that a rich heritage represents, to maximize effects.

Units need to integrate their heritage into their ceremonies and training as much as possible. Regulations used to require units to recite their history during organization days, a far cry from organization days now that have generally turned into sporting events. Reciting the history and setting up displays or reenactments of particular periods, go a long way towards the creation of a "living heritage," something a young soldier can relate to, see, and touch. To make the heritage a daily influence on the soldiers, some units include their heritage in unit handbooks issued to incoming personnel, introduce incoming personnel to the unit and unit colors in parade formations, or establish unit museums or displays in headquarters or mess halls. Imagination is usually the only limiting factor here. The 1st Engineer Battalion, training for a rotation at the National Training Center (NTC) that started on 6 June 1992, turned to the unit history to link soldiers with the decorated and successful past of the battalion. Using references available, the battalion noted the coincidences in training and dates from unit activities in 1944 and the preparations for D-Day. These coincidences became integrated into the NTC preparations, sometimes dictating the actual timing of the NTC preparations

themselves. The coincidences were highlighted to the soldiers at every opportunity, an eerie example of history repeating itself, and had a visible impact on the attitude and morale of the battalion.

Although not conclusive, Army personnel policies may also influence the preservation of unit heritage. Unit deployments and redeployments, to and from missions, and in and out of combat areas, appear to preserve heritage better than assignments and rotations of individuals. The evidence is qualitative perception only, but may be attributed to the greater sense of camaraderie, greater dedication to the unit, friends, and ideals, and possibly the shared experience by many individuals and a combined desire to preserve that heritage. Assignments and rotations of individuals, on the other hand, are a personal experience where the entire "tour of duty" in an already deployed unit is the story of the individual. This lack of commonality with the rest of the members of a unit tends to shift focus from the shared experience of the group, to the experience of the individual, diminishing the value of the unit and increasing the chances of loss of unit heritage. The most visual examples of these phenomena are the type of books that have come out of World War II and Vietnam. Scanning the shelves of any library or bookstore, the preponderance of books that emerged from World War II focus on specific events and units in the war. Books telling the stories of individuals are the exception. The opposite is true when reviewing literature from Vietnam, where the majority are stories of individuals and their experiences in the war. The difference may lie in how soldiers entered and participated in the conflicts. In World War II, soldiers generally trained as a unit,

deployed and fought as units, then redeployed as a mixture of units and individuals. In Vietnam, only the initial units deploying to the war went and fought as a team, with the majority of soldiers rotating through units and the war on individual, one year tours.

The simplest recommendation to maximize the preservation of Army unit heritage is to never inactivate, reorganize, move, or reflag units, while keeping soldiers in the same units as long as possible. Obviously, this is not an alternative, but it should serve as baseline guidance, minimizing change in units while maximizing soldier time in units.

In March of this year, while this thesis was being written, the Army announced "reflagging" plans that will inactivate the 1st Infantry Division at Fort Riley, Kansas; reflag the 3rd Infantry Division in Germany as the 1st Infantry Division; reflag the 24th Infantry Division at Fort Stewart, Georgia, as the 3rd Infantry Division; and inactivate the 24th Infantry Division. As part of this reshuffling, the two maneuver brigade teams at Fort Riley will remain and become the third brigades of the 1st Infantry and the 1st Armored Divisions in Germany. The old 1st Brigade, 1ID, supported by the 1st Engineer Battalion, will remain the 1st Brigade while the 2nd and 3rd Brigades will be with the division in Germany. The old 2nd Brigade, 1ID, will reflag as the 3rd Brigade, 1st Armored Division while the 1st and 2nd Brigades remain with the 1AD headquarters in Germany. The 70th Engineer Battalion, originally selected by the CMH for its' history and ties to the 1st Infantry Division, will remain at Fort Riley to support the reflagged 3rd Brigade, 1st Armored Division. This is in spite of the implied

promise that the battalion was activated as part of the 1st Infantry Division package and in spite of the heritage the battalion, the division, and the 2nd Brigade have forged over the last two years. The same story applies to the engineer battalions of the other divisions involved in the reflagging operation. Heritage and continuity have once again lost out to convenience.

Several specific conclusions and recommendations for each of the individual components of unit heritage, history, property, and customs and traditions, also result from the review of the preservation system and the case study. Planning documents and reports are generated daily in a unit, they make history the best preserved component of unit heritage. They are generated for both routine peacetime and wartime unit operations, are ordinarily filed and maintained for some period of time, and are easily shipped and stored. Most important, they are transmitted to higher headquarters, increasing the distribution and subsequently increasing the chances of preservation by inclusion in the files of the higher headquarters. Documents also possess little monetary value, so chances of theft are slim, and a heritage collection plan would enhance both the quality and quantity of the historical component of unit heritage.

Training, education, increased awareness, and planning will significantly decrease conflicts with unit missions and initiation of an enforcement program will add stimulus to routinize unit heritage preservation efforts. A thought out evacuation or turn-in contingency plan, with clearly defined disposition instructions and responsibilities and included as an inspectable item in the enforcement program, would

resolve most, if not all problems associated with mobilization and deployment. Reserve Component officers and noncommissioned officers of the Individual Ready Reserve (IRR) could be trained as unit historians and assigned to units in the event of mobilization to act as the unit historical officer during periods of mobilization and deployment, completing their heritage preservation records prior to demobilization and returning home. These IRR historians could also serve annual active duty periods with their designated unit, refining records and enhancing the heritage preservation efforts of the unit. Combined with a heritage collection plan, this would significantly add to the quality and quantity of a unit heritage.

Another obvious conclusion from the case study results is that heritage from periods of war seem to be better preserved than periods of peace. One can only speculate for the reasons behind this, but it is plausible that wartime has a sense of something big, something important for the participants and worthy of preservation, while peace time is considered routine, unimportant, and of little value. The Unit Journals, previously required by regulations, are great tools that capture daily highlights, add a personal touch and the human dimension, and would enhance both peacetime and wartime preservation of unit heritage. Journals should focus only on things that have changed from the prior day, incorporated into the unit heritage files, and be routinely verified by the unit commander. The other recommendations already proposed, will once again enhance this component of unit heritage.

The case study shows that property component of unit heritage is not as well preserved as the history. Property is a physical challenge, it requires space, maintenance, handling, and accountability. Of the three components of unit heritage, it has the most potential sentimental and monetary value, making it the most susceptible to theft or misappropriation. Any property of historical significance is easily misunderstood, and quickly devalued by someone without direct association to the unit and appreciation of the significance of the property. The multiple storage locations, and changing agencies responsible for maintaining stored property of inactivated units have probably resulted in the loss of substantial unit property over the last fifty years. Combine this probability with the fact that until recently, property was viewed as a supply action and the agencies and storage facilities were manned by supply personnel with no historical training, there is sufficient cause to believe the preservation system may have lost unit heritage property. The Army has made substantial advancements in the preservation of properties of inactivated units by turning responsibility over to the CMH and constructing new storage facilities manned by CMH and supply personnel.

The lack of knowledge or awareness of regulatory requirements in units, means units are unaware of historical property accountability requirements. Historically significant unit property is difficult to identify, sometimes even by units themselves. Sometimes, an object is instantly recognizable as historically significant. The 1st Engineer Battalion punchbowl, for example, presented to the battalion by a former commander, Ulysses S. Grant III, is obviously historically significant

since it is solid silver and originated from the grandson of a former President and General of the U.S. Army. At other times, historically significant items are harder to identify, as is when property becomes historically significant. A relatively common item now may be a key link to the past of a unit in another 50 years. The three copper rings, or bracelets, that former 70th Battalion Commander Colonel (Retired) Robert K. O'Connell, received from the Montagnard tribe, had only personal significance to O'Connell in Vietnam. Those same three rings, however, now represent a physical link to the past and possess historical value to a reactivated battalion with practically no other historically significant property. A simple coffee cup with a unit crest and the name of a current company commander will become irreplaceable if that commander later becomes Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the President of the United States, or the first man to set foot on the surface of Mars. Ultimately, the preservation of property requires a desire to preserve a unit heritage and a sensitivity to history and tradition.

In addition to already stated recommendations, unit commanders and historical officers require training to detect heritage property worthy of preservation. This topic, in addition to a review of regulatory penalties for improper preservation, needs to be included in preservation training of commanders. Additionally, to ensure there is no misconception of the value of a specific piece of unit property from people outside the unit, the unit needs to prepare a fact sheet describing the property and explaining the connection and value to the unit. Local military museums should assist and advise units in



determining proper display and storage conditions to ensure the safety and preservation of property, as well as ensuring the property is properly recorded in the historical property catalog.

Customs and traditions, the final component of unit heritage, are apparently preserved only by accident and exception. They are generally actions, procedures, protocols, etiquette, and formalities everyone in a unit takes for granted. Customs and traditions are rarely documented within a unit, they just happen, often something that "has always been done that way." They are handed down by word of mouth and action to new generations. They are learned, which means continuity is essential. Continuity can improve if customs and traditions are documented and added to the unit heritage files and to a unit handbook if one exists. Junior Lieutenants, IRR historians, or unit historians could easily write a simple fact sheet outlining a custom or tradition, where it originated, how it is maintained in the unit, and any other significant information. The fact sheet should also list several points of contact who are familiar with the custom or tradition, their service/social security number and their best guess permanent address where they could be contacted for future questions in the event the unit is reactivated after a break in continuity.

Action addressing these conclusions is necessary if the Army is really serious about preserving the heritage of its' units. The value of unit heritage, combined with the Army's curse of cyclical activations and inactivations, demands an efficient and effective system to preserve the heritage of Army units. The Army has clearly failed to preserve the heritage of the 70th Engineer Battalion through fifty years of

activations, redesignations, and inactivations and there is no assessing the losses of countless other units over the same period. During this massive current period of downsizing, and the accompanying inactivations and redesignations, one has to wonder how much heritage will be lost and how much effort will be required at some point in the future when units reactivate and an action officer tries to reconstruct something that we, the current "custodians of unit legacy," have let slip through our fingers. Unit heritage is important, it does have value, and the Army system charged with preserving it requires immediate modification.

## GLOSSARY

Activate. "To bring into being or establish a unit that has been constituted. Usually personnel and equipment are assigned at this time; however, a unit may be active at zero strength, that is without personnel or equipment. This term was not used before 1921. It is never used when referring to Army National Guard units, and only since World War II has it been used in connection with Army Reserve units." As quoted in n.a., Organizational History, (Washington, D.C., U.S. Army Center of Military History, 1986).

Allot. "To assign a unit to one of the components of the United States Army. The present components of the Army are the Regular Army (RA), the Army National Guard (ARNG), and the US Army Reserve (USAR), which was formerly known as the Organized Reserves and Organized Reserve Corps. During World War I units were also allotted to the National Army, and during World War II to the Army of the United States. A unit may be withdrawn from any component except the Army National Guard and allotted to another. The new allotment, however, does not change the history, lineage, and honors of the unit." As quoted in Organizational History.

Assign. "To make a unit part of a larger organization and place it under that organization's command and control until it is relieved from the assignment. As a rule, only divisional and separate brigade assignments are shown in unit lineages." As quoted in Organizational History.

Color. "A specific flag symbolic of the spirit and tradition of either the United States, or the position, individual, or organization represented. The flag of the United States when displayed as in [AR 840-10] is known as the 'National Color.' The term 'color' when used alone refers to the national color. The term 'colors' means the national and positional or organizational colors." As quoted in Department of the Army, AR 840-10, Flags, Guidons, Streamers, Tabards, and Automobile and Aircraft Plates, (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 29 October 1990), 65.

Consolidate. "To merge or combine two or more units into one new unit. The new unit may retain the designation of one of the original units or it may have a new designation, but it inherits the history, lineage, and honors of all the units affected by the merger. In the nineteenth century, consolidation was frequently a merger of several under-strength units to form one full strength

unit. At the present time, in the Regular Army and Army Reserve, units are usually consolidated when they are inactive or when only one of the units is active; therefore personnel and equipment are seldom involved. In the Army National Guard, on the other hand, active units are often consolidated and their personnel are combined in the new unit." As quoted in Organizational History.

Constitute. "To place the designation of a new unit on the official rolls of the Army." As quoted in Organizational History.

Convert. "To transfer a unit from one branch of the Army to another, for example, from infantry to armor. Such a move always requires a redesignation, with the unit adopting the name of its new branch; however, there is no break in the historical continuity of the unit. If the unit is active, it must also be reorganized under a new table of organization and equipment (TOE)." As quoted in Organizational History.

Demobilize. "To remove the designation of the unit from the official rolls of the Army. If the unit is active, it must also be inactivated. This term is used in unit lineages only when referring to the period during and immediately after World War I." As quoted in Organizational History.

Designation. "The official title of a unit, consisting usually of a number and a name." As quoted in Organizational History.

Disband. "To remove the designation of a Regular Army or U.S. Army Reserve unit from the official rolls of the Army. Disbandment is intended to be permanent and irreversible except in extraordinary circumstances. The word is also applicable to Army National Guard units prior to World War I. Since then, the phrase 'withdraw Federal recognition' is used for Army National Guard units rather than 'disband.'" As quoted in Department of the Army, AR 220-5, Designation, Classification and Change in Status of Units, (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 3 September 1991), 7.

Honors. Campaign participation credit, war service credit, organizational decorations, and foreign organizational decorations that a unit has been awarded and is entitled to.

Inactivate. "To place a unit that is not currently needed in an inoperative status without assigned personnel or equipment. The unit's designation, however, is retained on the rolls of the Army, and it can be reactivated whenever needed. Its personnel and equipment are reassigned to one or more active units, but its organizational properties and trophies are put in storage. When the unit is activated again, it is assigned new personnel and equipment, but it keeps its old history, honors, and organizational properties and trophies. This term has been used only since 1921. Before that time, units either remained active

or were removed from the rolls of the Army." As quoted in Organizational History.

Lineage. "The lineage of an organization establishes the continuity of the unit despite various changes in designation or status, thereby certifying its entitlement to honors, as well as heraldic items, organizational historical property, organizational history files, and other tangible assets." As quoted in Department of the Army, AR 870-5, Military History: Responsibilities, Policies, and Procedures, (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 12 July 1993), 7.

Organize. "To assign personnel and equipment to a unit and make it operative, that is, capable of performing its mission. This term was used instead of activate prior to 1921 and is still used for Army National Guard Units." As quoted in AR 220-5, 7.

Reactivate. Unofficial, but commonly used term within the Army, used to differentiate between the activation of a unit for the first time, and the activation of a unit that had been activated previously.

Reconstitute. "A former Regular Army or Army Reserve organization that has been disbanded may be reconstituted by the Secretary of the Army. The basis of the official link between the disbanded organization and the reconstituted unit is the Secretary's clearly expressed intent to perpetuate the disbanded organization." As quoted in AR 870-5, 8.

Redesignate. "To change a unit's official name or number or both. Redesignation is a change of title only; The unit's history, lineage, and honors remain the same. Active as well as inactive units can be redesignated, but personnel and equipment of an active unit are not changed unless it is reorganized at the same time." As quoted in Organizational History.

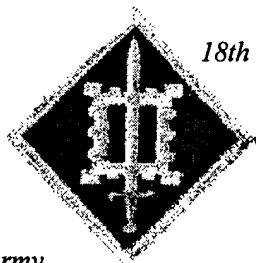
Reorganize. "To change the structure of a unit in accordance with a new table of organization and equipment (TOE), or to change from one type of unit to another within the same branch of the Army, for example, from mechanized to airborne infantry. When referring to the Army National Guard, this term also means to organize an active unit again." As quoted in Organizational History.

Table of Organization and Equipment (TOE). "A document that prescribes the official designation, normal mission, organizational structure, and personnel and equipment requirements for a military unit and is the basis for an authorization document." As quoted in AR 220-5, 8.

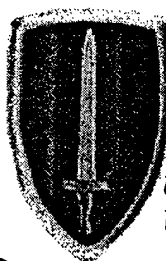
Unit. "Any military organization whose structure is prescribed by a competent military authority and that has its own unit identification code." As quoted in AR 220-5, 8.

Unit Heritage. The combination of unit history, unit property, and unit customs and traditions.

APPENDIX A  
SAMPLE HERITAGE PAMPHLET FOR THE  
70th ENGINEER BATTALION



*18th Engineer Brigade*



*US Army,  
Vietnam*



*XVIII Airborne  
Corps*



*Germany*



*Tactical Command  
US Forces, Austria*



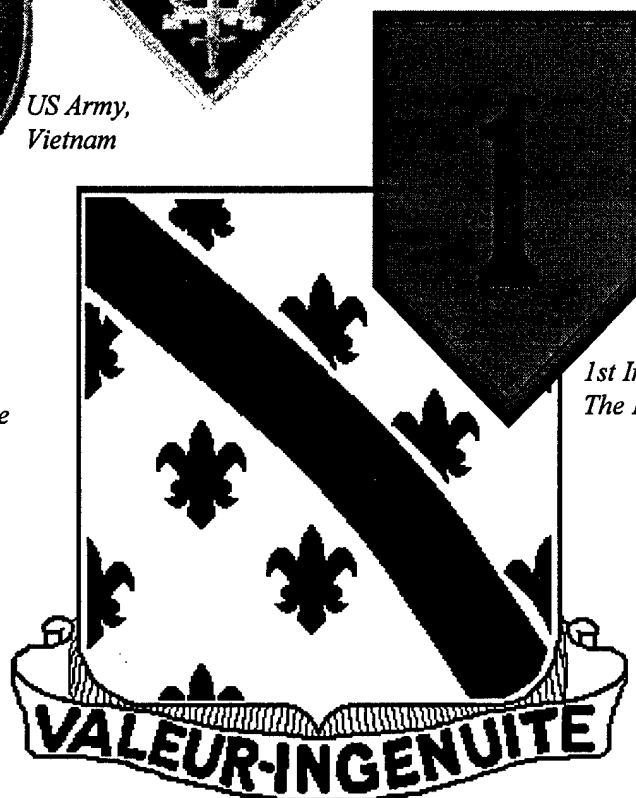
*US Forces,  
Austria*



*Third Army*



*Fourth Army*



*1st Infantry Division  
The Big Red One*

# ***AN INTRODUCTION TO THE HERITAGE OF THE 70th ENGINEER BATTALION (KODIAKS)***



## INTRODUCTION

Unit heritage consists of three components: unit history, unit property, and unit customs and traditions. Unit history is simply the record of unit significant events that addresses the who, what, when, where, why, and how of a unit and forms the foundation of a unit heritage. Unit property is all of the paraphernalia that the unit has accumulated during its existence on active duty. Accumulation of this property begins with the unit activation and is not only physical evidence of unit existence and activities, it also sparks recollections of those activities and what they represent to the unit. The final component, unit traditions, customs and practices, is also the most nebulous and fleeting component of unit heritage. Like unit property, unit traditions, customs and practices begin with the units' activation and, if sustained and practiced, can also spark recollections of those activities and what they represent to the unit. These traditions, customs and practices take numerous forms.

## UNIT HISTORY

### Unit Crest

#### Blazonry

Shield: Argent (Heraldic term for "Silver"); somee-de-lis (Taken from Fleur - de - lis, a heraldic device composed of a stylized three - petaled iris flower, once used as the armorial emblem of French sovereigns); a bend of arched gules (Heraldic definition for the "red diagonal arch," literally "diagonal arch red").

Crest: None

Motto: Valeur - Ingenuite (Valor - Ingenuity)

#### Description

The colors, scarlet and white, are those of the Corps of Engineers. The fleurs-de-lis scattered over the shield symbolize the organization's World War II service in Europe, and the curved diagonal band represents outstanding service in the construction of the Canadian-Alaskan Military Highway.

The distinctive insignia consists of the shield and motto of the coat of arms for this organization.



## Unit Lineage and Honors Certificate



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY

### Lineage and Honors

#### 70th ENGINEER BATTALION (KODIAKS)

Constituted 1 October 1933 in the Regular Army as the 2d Battalion, 35th Engineers

Activated 15 July 1941 at Fort Snelling, Minnesota

Reorganized and redesignated 25 September 1943 as the 145th Engineer Combat Battalion

Inactivated 8 January 1946 at Camp Patrick Henry, Virginia

Redesignated 30 January 1947 as the 550th Engineer Combat Battalion

Redesignated 15 March 1949 as the 70th Engineer Combat Battalion

Activated 1 April 1949 in Austria

Reorganized and redesignated 16 March 1953 as the 70th Engineer Battalion

Inactivated 30 November 1969 at Fort Lewis, Washington

Assigned 17 October 1991 to the 1st Infantry Division and activated at Fort Riley, Kansas

## Unit Lineage and Honors Certificate (Continued)

### 70th ENGINEER BATTALION (KODIAKS)

#### CAMPAIGN PARTICIPATION CREDIT

##### World War II

American Theater, Streamer without  
inscription

Normandy  
Northern France  
Rhineland  
Ardennes-Alsace  
Central Europe

##### Vietnam

Defense

Counteroffensive  
Counteroffensive, Phase II  
Counteroffensive, Phase III  
Tet Counteroffensive  
Counteroffensive, Phase IV  
Counteroffensive, Phase V  
Counteroffensive, Phase VI  
Tet 69/Counteroffensive  
Summer-Fall 1969  
Winter-Spring 1970

#### DECORATIONS

Presidential Unit Citation (Army). Streamer embroidered PLEIKU PROVINCE

Meritorious Unit Commendation (Army). Streamer embroidered ALCAN  
HIGHWAY

Meritorious Unit Commendation (Army). Streamer embroidered VIETNAM  
1965-1966


## Unit Lineage and Honors Certificate (Continued)

### 70th ENGINEER BATTALION (KODIAKS)

Meritorious Unit Commendation (Army). Streamer embroidered VIETNAM  
1966

Meritorious Unit Commendation (Army). Streamer embroidered VIETNAM  
1966-1967

BY ORDER OF THE SECRETARY OF THE ARMY:

  
HAROLD W. NELSON  
Brigadier General, United States Army  
Chief of Military History

## **Fort Riley and the 1st Infantry Division**

Fort Riley is closely linked to the story of western expansion. As early as the 1840's, travelers along the Oregon and Santa Fe Trails were beginning a massive migration across the highest plains in Kansas. This created the need for military posts to guard the trails through what was then known as "Indian Territory".

In 1852, Major E.A. Ogden established a temporary camp north of the Kansas river in the area where the main post is now located. Situated near the junction of the Republican and Smoky Hill River, the encampment was originally known as "Camp Center", because it was thought to be the geographic center of the United States. A permanent post was authorized the following year and the new installation was renamed Fort Riley in honor of Major General Bennett Riley, who had been a distinguished veteran of the Mexican War and commander of the first military escort along the Santa Fe Trail.

Fort Riley played an important role in the Indian Wars of the 1860's and 1870's, and was designed a Cavalry Headquarters in 1885. It was here that the famous 7th Cavalry was organized in the summer of 1866 under the command of Colonel Andrew J. Smith and Lt. Colonel George Custer. From its origins at Fort Riley, the Seventh Cavalry rode to such well-known campaigns as the Washita River, the Little Big Horn and Wounded Knee.

During the 1880's, Fort Riley became the center of military training for cavalry and light artillery, and the home for the Mounted Service School, resulting in the post becoming known as the "cradle Of the Cavalry".

The First Division story didn't begin until June 1917 when General John J. (Blackjack) Pershing arrived in France with the First Expeditionary Force. The name was changed to the First Division, and the "Fighting First" led the way for American troops in World War I. The Division was the first to go overseas in WW I, the first in combat against the Germans, and the first to enter Germany. The Division's exploits led General Pershing to describe it as the "best damned division in any army in the world "

During WW I, the Division, now known as the 1st Infantry Division, again led the way-the first to reach England, the first to hit the Germans in North Africa and Sicily, the first on the bloody beaches of Normandy on D-Day and the first to capture a major German city (Aachen). Thereafter, the Division remained in Germany, first as an occupation force and later in partnership with the new Germany under the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).

Fort Riley became home to the Division in 1955 and remained such until September 1965, when the Division returned to combat, this time in Vietnam. For the next five years, the 1st Infantry Division fought With a two-fold mission: to defend the villages and to pacify the countryside. Besides performing search and clear missions in Vietnam, the division actively participated in civic programs to help improve the quality of life.

In April 1970, the colors of the Division returned to Fort Riley.

Another first was credited to the Division when it embarked on the first of a long series of Return of Forces to Germany (REFORGER) exercises. These exercises serve to demonstrate our nation's determination and capability to defend Western Europe, side-by-side with our NATO allies.

In December 1990 the 1st Infantry Division again deployed overseas for combat, this time as a key element of Operation Desert Shield and Desert Storm. The 1st Infantry Division led the way for the 7th U.S. Corps' thrust into Iraq that ultimately broke the back of the Iraqi Army and decimated the Republican Guard. In May of 1991 the Division returned home to Fort Riley.

Today the 1st Infantry Division (Mechanized) remains ready to meet any challenge the nations may call upon it to accept, ready to again demonstrate its' commitment to its' motto: "NO MISSION TOO DIFFICULT. NO SACRIFICE TOO GREAT, DUTY FIRST!"

### **The 70th Engineer Battalion**

The 35th Engineer Regiment (General Service) was originally constituted on paper, as a Regular Army unit with an effective date of 1 October 1933. The regiment, still a paper unit, was redesignated as the 35th Engineer Regiment (Combat) (Corps) on 16 December 1940 and authorized activation at Camp Joseph T. Robinson, Arkansas. Several other amendments followed before the battalion finally activated on 15 July 1941 at Fort Snelling, Minnesota, with a total personnel strength of one technical sergeant. By the end of July the regimental strength had ballooned to 26 officers, including the Regimental Commander, LTC Robert D. Ingalls, and 9 enlisted soldiers. Many of the officers were Lieutenants, fresh from their initial officers training. Many of those had recently graduated from what has since become Iowa State University, volunteering en masse for the service in the new regiment.

Leaving for Camp Robinson, Arkansas, the regiment arrived on 14 August 1941. Personnel strength increased with the arrival of 175 soldiers on 28 August and another 399 on 2 September. The inexperienced regiment received an early baptism of training when it joined the Army's Louisiana Maneuvers from 21 September until 6 October. On 8 December 1941, the regiment assembled and heard President Roosevelt's radio address calling for a declaration of war against Japan. Notification of unit movement followed five days later.

On 20 December 1941, the 35th Regiment loaded onto three trains and traveled across Kansas, through Pueblo, Colorado, and Salt Lake City, Utah, finally arriving at Fort Ord, California on Christmas Day. Christmas dinner consisted of cold coffee and

ham sandwiches as the men of the regiment offloaded the trains and set up their new home. During their stay at Fort Ord, soldiers spent many of the weekends and holidays bivouacked on the California beaches as a contingency against a Japanese invasion of the United States.

The regiment departed Fort Ord on 10 March 1942, enroute to Canada, arriving at Dawson Creek, British Columbia, on 16 March 1942 for work on the Alaska - Canada (ALCAN) Highway. U.S. and Canadian leaders deemed the ALCAN critical to the defense of Alaska and Western Canada and envisioned a secure inland route. No road existed prior to the project and much of the proposed route lay in unexplored and unmapped territory. The route itself was nothing more than a series of "best options" linking existing Northwest air ferry staging airfields at Fort St. John, Fort Nelson, Watson Lake, and Whitehorse, Canada, with Alaskan airfields at Northway and Big Delta.

The project plan entailed two phases, the first cutting an initial pioneer road using quickly mobilized and deployable Army Engineer units, followed by civilian contract work under control of the U.S. Public Roads Administration, to upgrade the pioneer road to a permanent highway. Key to the success of the project was the movement of the 35th Engineer Regiment from Dawson Creek to Fort Nelson. Completion of the project in the required single short arctic construction season of 1942 meant the 35th would have to conduct a winter march north, in temperatures as low as -35 degrees F, and cross the unbridged 1,800 foot wide Peace River south of Fort St. John while the river ice could still support traffic. The 35th had to carry 150 days of equipment, supplies, and spare parts, as well as 60 days of rations since Fort Nelson was only accessible by air for some time after the thaw.

Insulating the frozen Peace River crossing against thaw, engineers placed a thick layer of sawdust on the ice, then reinforced it with heavy wooden planks. By late March, the 1,900 officers and men; over 900 tons of supplies and equipment; 429,000 gallons of oil products; and carryalls, graders, power shovels, compressors, trucks, and ten 23-ton Caterpillar D-8 tractors of the regiment had crossed the river. The last elements pulled into Fort Nelson on 5 April.

The 35th achieved mission success when the engineers from 35th and 340th Regiments linked their portions of the road at Contact Creek on 24 September 1942, finally connecting Fort St. John to Whitehorse. The regiment immediately reversed direction and began work to improve and finish the trail they had cut, as well as reduce all grades along it to less than 10 %. It continued to improve and maintain the road throughout the winter. The regiment also repaired bridges along the highway, cleared emergency landing strips, and cut over 250 miles of additional trails off the highway to link up with other roads and facilities. The ALCAN officially opened two months after the 35th and 340th linkup when the first truck from Dawson Creek reached Fairbanks. During the 5 month effort, the 35th Regiment was officially credited with the construction of 337 miles of road, an average of almost 2-1/4 miles a day through

unmapped wilderness, forests, peat bogs, mountains, and waterways. From the beginning of the project, the regiment had completed 23 primary, multi-span bridges totaling 5,230 feet, and numerous smaller single span bridges. Combined, the total length of bridges constructed would span over a mile. The regiment was awarded the Meritorious Unit Commendation on 15 April 1943, for outstanding service in the construction of the Canadian-Alaskan Military Highway from March to October 1942.

The regiment remained in Canada, improving and maintaining its sector of the highway until 28 August 1943, when it returned to Camp White, outside of Medford, Oregon, on 1 September 1943. The 35th Regiment inactivated on 25 September 1943, and its subordinate units were reorganized and redesignated. The Headquarters and Headquarters Service Company became the Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1122nd Engineer Combat Group. The 1st Battalion, 35th Regiment, became the 35th Engineer Combat Battalion, and the 2nd Battalion became the 145th Engineer Combat Battalion, with CPT Wyman P. Boynton commanding. Companies D, E, and F, 35th Regiment, redesignated as Company A, B, and C, 145th Battalion.

A new commander, LTC John F. McGaughey, received orders in March 1944, sending it to "New York or Boston Port of Embarkation enroute to permanent overseas station." The main body of the Battalion departed Camp White on 10 April 1944, and arrived at Camp Shanks, New York, on 15 April for staging operations. It reported to the New York Port of Embarkation on 18 April, departed 27 April aboard the liner *New Amsterdam*, and arrived in Gurock, Scotland, on 27 April 1944.

The Battalion was assigned to the Third Army and remained in England, training and preparing for the European invasion, until 6 July 1944 when it loaded onto two LSTs. Sailing on 7 July, the ships were run aground during the night's hightide, and the battalion offloaded onto Utah beach shortly after sunrise on 8 July.

Becoming operational on 10 July 1944, the 145th Battalion focused primarily on clearing rubble from roads, removing minefields, digging artillery emplacements, road repair and engineer reconnaissance during the Normandy campaign. Company C recorded the first bridge construction mission for the battalion in Europe, a 50 foot long, Class 40 Bailey Bridge on 28 July 1944.

After the Allied breakout from Normandy, the battalion continued to provide combat engineer support to Third Army units across France. Avranches, Rennes, Le Mans, Chalons, Nancy, Remicourt and Metz were just a few of the French cities the battalion visited. With lead elements of the Third Army on German soil in November 1944 and poised to attack the Siegfried Line, the Germans launched their Ardennes offensive, otherwise known as the "Battle of the Bulge." The 145th Battalion, supporting key Third Army units, changed direction on 21 December and moved north as part of Patton's attempt to break through to the surrounded and besieged Bastogne in Belgium. Successfully linking up with the 101st Airborne Division on 26 December, Third Army



units continued their attack, this time penetrating the Siegfried Line on 28 January 1945. MAJ Wyman P. Boynton assumed command of the battalion in February 1945 and Company B became the first unit of the battalion to step on German soil, moving into Neuerburg on 25 February.

The battalion continued supporting the Third Army advance, arriving at Oppenheim, Germany, on the banks of the Rhine River on 24 March. Focusing on bridge maintenance and sustainment operations for the next month, the battalion then moved forward and concentrated on mobility and general engineering support to Third Army until the end of the war. It remained in Germany until 27 November 1945, when it departed for France, arriving on 29 November.

The Battalion staged for redeployment until 22 December, when it boarded the ship *SS James Fannin*, at Marseilles, France, on 22 December 1945. Sailing two days later, it arrived back in the U.S. in early January 1946. On 8 January 1946, the 145th Engineer Combat Battalion inactivated at Camp Patrick Henry, Virginia, and reverted to a "paper unit," remaining on the Army roles in name only.

The 145th Battalion was redesignated as the 550th Engineer Combat Battalion on 30 January 1947, and was redesignated again on 15 March 1949 as the 70th Engineer Combat Battalion. Both of these redesignations were paper changes and did not effect a manned unit.

On 15 March 1949, the 70th Engineer Combat Battalion was assigned to the European Command as part of an Army attempt to convert occupation forces to tactical units. The reactivated battalion assimilated various construction and engineer support activities throughout Austria, previously under control of the U.S. Forces, Austria Engineer. The newly activated Battalion supported an equally new U.S. Forces, Austria, tactical command, essentially a reinforced regimental combat team, commanded by Brigadier General James C. Fry, whose mission was to delay any potential attacks from the Soviet Union, taking advantage of U.S. preoccupation with the war in Korea.

The activation of the Headquarters and Headquarters Service Company, 70th Engineer Battalion occurred on 1 April 1949, at Salzburg, Austria, with an authorized strength of 20 officers, 3 warrant officers, and 233 enlisted men. Company A was assigned to European Command on 5 April 1949, and was activated at Innsbruck, Austria, on 1 May 1949, with an authorized strength of 5 officers and 155 enlisted men. Company A personnel and equipment came primarily from the inactivating 518th Engineer Company. The Battalion transferred from Salzburg to Camp McCauley, Austria, in June 1950. Company D was constituted for the first time on 16 January 1951, and was activated, along with Companies B and C, at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, on 1 February 1951. The Companies were assigned to Third Army, then attached to V Corps and the 522nd Engineer Service Battalion at Fort Bragg.

The three companies departed Fort Bragg in July 1951, arriving at Camp Kilmer, New Jersey on 23 July for staging. They boarded the *USNS General Callan* and departed on 1 August, docking at Leghorn, Italy, on 12 August. From there Company B arrived at Linz, Austria, and Companies C and D arrived at Saalfelden, Austria, on 13 August.

As part of the withdrawal of U.S. forces following the 15 May 1955, Austrian Peace Treaty, the Army reassigned the Battalion to U.S. Army, Europe, on 14 August 1955, and it departed Austria for Germany four days later. On 15 October 1955, the Battalion reorganized as the 70th Engineer Battalion (Combat) (Army) under the 1955 Table of Organization and Equipment and Company D inactivated as part of that reorganization. The Battalion remained in Germany until 1957, when it rotated back to the U.S. under the Gyroscope program and was assigned to the 3rd Army.

The main body departed from Bremerhaven, Germany, on 20 March 1957, aboard the ship *USNS Hodges*, arriving at the Brooklyn Army Terminal on 2 April and continuing on to its new station at Fort Campbell, Kentucky, later the same day. From 1958 to 1965, the Battalion settled into routine garrison operations at Fort Campbell, interrupted by deployments for major exercises as part of the 937th Engineer Group and the XVIII Airborne Corps, the Strategic Army Corps (STRAC) and forerunner of the Rapid Deployment Force.

On 9 October 1962, the 70th Battalion received notification alerting it for deployment "to enforce certain court orders in the state of Mississippi." The Battalion departed Fort Campbell on 27 September, arriving at Oxford, Mississippi, on 30 September 1962. It remained there until 7 October 1962, when it returned to Fort Campbell.

On 12 November 1963, the 70th Battalion was assigned as a "One-Buck" unit; a code designation applied by the Continental Army Command that required the battalion to be in readiness for deployment on 48 hour notice. On 10 July 1965, the Battalion was alerted for deployment to Vietnam and assignment to the U.S. Army, Pacific. Battalion equipment shipped first, moving to the port of Mobile, Alabama, on 15 July, while battalion personnel left Fort Campbell on 3 and 4 August 1965 and flew to Oakland Army Base, California, closing on 5 August. Uploading upon the *USS Mann* the same day, 600 men of the Battalion left the United States, arriving in Vietnam on 22 August.

Upon arrival in Vietnam, the Battalion advance party, with help from the 84th Engineer Battalion (Construction) had positioned the Battalion equipment in staging areas on the beach, facilitating link-up and organization for operations when the Battalion main body arrived. The 70th, which arrived at Qui Nhon on 23 August, was the first engineer combat battalion in the Republic of Vietnam, and soon established itself as the Workhorse of the 937th Group.

Immediately after arrival in-country, the Battalion began clearing roads for the deployment of the newly formed and deploying 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile) in An Khe. Assuming a two-shift, seven-day-a-week operation, the members of the unit devoted their efforts to prepare the cantonment area for the arrival of the Division. Often working under hostile fire, the 70th Engineer Battalion dauntlessly launched a massive construction program of logistical complexes, supply depots and numerous roads, defensive positions, airfields and cantonment facilities.

The battalion is also credited with construction of a 140 bed hospital, a division headquarters complex, aircraft storage and maintenance facilities, security lights and guard towers on the base perimeter. The Battalion completed the first concrete runway built in a theater of operations by engineer troops using a slip-form paving machine and continuously repaired bridges and upgraded roads along the 21 miles between An Khe and Pleiku.

On 12 June 1967, Company D was reconstituted, reactivated, and allotted to the Regular Army as part of the 70th Battalion. The battalion mission and location also changed later in the year. Ending its support of the 1st Cavalry Division in 1967, the battalion moved to Pleiku and shifted its focus to combat engineer missions consisting of base development, lines of communications construction and operational support. Operational support consisted primarily of mine clearing, land clearing, and demolition operations. Mine clearing operations were monotonous, dangerous and often repetitive. Land clearing operations were efforts to clear dense vegetation and jungle along roads and highways; of paramount importance to achieve not only military success, but successful economic growth and political stability of South Vietnam. Removing vegetation for several hundred meters on either side of a roadway also removed the cover and concealment required for enemy ambushes. Side benefits included cleared and fertile land for farming and significant contributions to the overall pacification effort of South Vietnam. Demolition missions required engineer teams to destroy enemy base camps, material and tunnels.

Construction of friendly defensive positions, preparation of landing zones, and even limited infantry pure missions, such as base camp and local security, ambushes, and patrolling also fell to the battalion. Lines of communication maintenance for the 70th primarily meant route repair and clearance, primarily from An Khe to Pleiku (Highway 19 - Street Without Joy) and from An Khe back to the coast of Qui Nhon. In an effort to impede movement of reinforcements, prevent resupply of ammunition and other supplies, and minimize the use of mobile reserves, the enemy routinely destroyed bridges and culverts with demolitions, established roadblocks, and emplaced minefields and booby traps.

In late 1968, control of the battalion transferred from the 937th Engineer Group to the 35th Engineer Group and the battalion moved to Camp Jerome, near Ban Me Thuot,

to continue area support operations. On 7 October 1969, the Army issued instructions for the Battalion to inactivate "as soon as possible, but not later than 31 December 1969. Air movement from Long Binh, Vietnam, to the U.S. Army Training Center and Fort Lewis, Washington, began on 21 November, with the last flight arriving on 29 November. On 30 November 1969, the 70th Engineer Battalion inactivated at Fort Lewis, Washington.

As part of the Army's Engineer Restructuring Initiative (ERI) to increase combat engineering support in heavy divisions, the 70th Battalion was once again called to active service as part of the 1st Infantry Division, the Big Red One. Activation of a Provisional Battalion occurred on 1 June 1993 at Fort Riley, Kansas, with the official reactivation taking place on 17 October 1993.

Unit Awards



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT  
THE PRESIDENT  
OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA  
HAS AWARDED THE  
**PRESIDENTIAL UNIT CITATION**  
TO THE

70TH ENGINEER BATTALION

FOR  
EXTRAORDINARY HEROISM IN MILITARY  
OPERATIONS AGAINST AN ARMED ENEMY.

IN THE REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM FROM 23 OCTOBER TO 26 NOVEMBER 1965

GIVEN UNDER MY HAND IN THE CITY OF WASHINGTON  
THIS        8TH        DAY OF        JANUARY        1966



*James S. Clark*  
SECRETARY OF THE ARMY

GENERAL ORDERS

NO. 40

HEADQUARTERS  
DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY  
WASHINGTON, D. C., 21 September 1967

*I -- PRESIDENTIAL UNIT CITATION (ARMY).* Award of the Presidential Unit Citation (Army) by The President of the United States of America to the following unit of the Armed Forces of the United States is confirmed in accordance with paragraph 194, AR 672-5-1. The text of the citation, signed by President Lyndon B. Johnson on 19 August 1967 reads as follows:

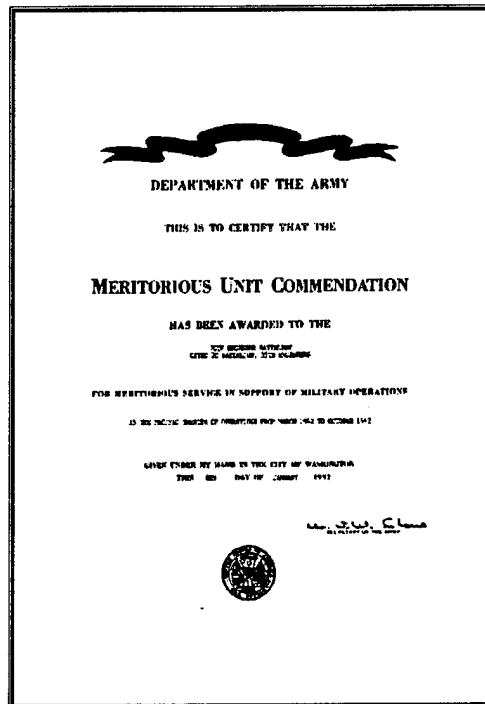
By virtue of the authority vested in me as President of the United States and as Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces of the United States, I have today awarded the Presidential Unit Citation (Army) for extraordinary heroism to : THE 1ST CAVALRY DIVISION (AIRMOBILE) AND ATTACHED UNITS:

*70th Engineer Battalion (Combat) (Army)*

The 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile) and attached units, distinguished themselves by outstanding performance of duty and extraordinary heroism in action against an armed enemy in the Republic of Vietnam during the period 23 October 1965 to 26 November 1965. Following the attack on a Special Forces camp at Plei Me, in Pleiku Province on 19 October 1965 by regular units of the Army of North Vietnam, the 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile) was committed to action. The division was initially assigned the mission of protecting the key communications center of Pleiku, in addition to providing fire support both for an Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN) armored column dispatched to the relief of the besieged camp, and for the camp itself. The 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile), having recently been organized under a completely new concept in tactical mobility, and having arrived in the Republic of Vietnam only a month earlier, responded quickly with an infantry Brigade and supporting forces. Using air assault techniques, the division deployed artillery batteries into firing positions deep within enemy - held territory and provided the vital fire support needed by the ARVN forces to accomplish the relief of the Special Forces camp. By 27 October, the tactical and strategic impact of the presence of a North Vietnamese regular army division in Pleiku Province necessitated a change in missions for the 1st Cavalry Division. The division was given an unlimited offensive role to seek out and destroy the enemy force. With bold thrusts, elements of the division pursued the North Vietnamese regiments across the dense and trackless jungles of the west-central highlands, seeking the enemy out in his previously secure sanctuaries and giving him no quarter. In unfavorable terrain and under logistical and tactical conditions that would have stopped a unit with less capability, motivation, and esprit, the cavalymen repeatedly and decisively defeated numerically superior enemy forces. The superb training, unflinching devotion to duty, and unsurpassed gallantry and intrepidity of the cavalymen, individually and collectively, resulted in numerous victories and succeeded in driving the invading North Vietnamese division back from its positions at Plei Me to the foot of the Chu Pong Massif. There, in the valley of the Ia Drang, the enemy was reinforced by a fresh regiment and undertook preparations for more incursions into Pleiku Province. The 1st Cavalry Division deployed by air its men and weapons to launch an attack on this enemy staging area, which was 35 kilometers from the nearest road and 50 kilometers from the nearest logistical base. Fully utilizing air mobility in applying their combat power in a series of offensive blows, the men of the division completely defeated the numerically superior enemy. When the enemy finally withdrew his broken forces from the battlefield, the offensive capability of the North Vietnamese Army in the II Corps tactical zone had been blunted. The outstanding performance and extraordinary heroism of the members of the 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile) and attached units under the most hazardous and adverse conditions, reflect great credit upon themselves, the United States Army, and the Armed Forces of the United States.

By Order of the Secretary of the Army:

HAROLD K. JOHNSON  
*General, United States Army*  
*Chief of Staff*



GENERAL ORDERS  
NO. 18

WAR DEPARTMENT  
WASHINGTON, April 15, 1943

X\_Citation of troop units engaged in construction of the Alcan Highway.—The units listed below are cited for meritorious conduct in the construction of the Canadian-Alaskan Military Highway during the period March to October 1942:

*35th Engineer Combat Regiment*

The above units were charged with the task of constructing a 1,600-mile highway from Fort St. John, British Columbia, Canada, to Slana, Alaska, with all speed within the physical capacity of the troops. The general route selected for the highway lay across vast areas of almost impenetrable wilderness, vaguely mapped and but little known. Commencing with the spring thaw and continuing through the summer floods, the troops overcame the difficulties imposed by mountainous terrain, deep muskeg, torrential streams, heavy forests, and an ever-lengthening supply line. By virtue of remarkable engineering ability, ingenious improvisation, and unsurpassed devotion to duty, the units assigned to the highway construction completed their mission in one short working season, and thereby opened a supply road to Alaska that is of inestimable strategic value to the war effort of their country.

The foregoing citation does not come within the provisions of paragraph 12, AR 260 10, or section III, Circular No. 342, War Department, 1942.

By Order of the Secretary of War:

G. C. MARSHALL  
*Chief of Staff*

GENERAL ORDERS

NO. 17

HEADQUARTERS  
DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY  
WASHINGTON, D. C., 23 April 1968

*II -- MERITORIOUS UNIT COMMENDATION.* By direction of the Secretary of the Army, under the provisions of paragraph 203, AR672-5-1, the Meritorious Unit Commendation is awarded to the following named units of the United States Army for exceptionally meritorious achievement in the performance of outstanding service during the periods indicated:

The citations read as follows:

THE 70TH ENGINEER BATTALION (COMBAT) and attached unit: 511th Engineer Company (Panel Bridge). For exceptionally meritorious achievement in the performance of outstanding service: The 70TH ENGINEER BATTALION (COMBAT) (ARMY) and attached unit distinguished themselves in support of military operations in the Republic of Vietnam from August 1965 to June 1966. The members of these units demonstrated extraordinary fortitude, tenacity and technical competence while providing superb combat engineer support of the 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile). Immediately after arrival in country, the Battalion began clearing roads for the deployment of the division into An Khe. Assuming a two-shift, seven-day-a-week operation, the members of this unit selflessly devoted all their efforts to preparing the cantonment area for the arrival of the division forces. Often working under hostile fire, the 70TH ENGINEER BATTALION (COMBAT) (ARMY) manifested a spirit of aggressive determination in the prompt and efficient execution of every mission. The 511TH ENGINEER COMPANY (PB) arrived in November 1965 and rapidly provided exemplary panel bridge, dump truck and vertical construction support. Through personal sacrifice, courage and singular perseverance, these two units dauntlessly launched a massive construction program of logistical complexes, supply depots, hospitals, the Division headquarters and numerous roads, defensive positions, airfields and cantonment facilities. Despite the harsh environment and major shortages of supplies and equipment, every task was marked with the highest degree of professionalism and consummate workmanship, thereby immeasurably enhancing the successful prosecution of the 1st Cavalry Division mission in the Republic of Vietnam. The remarkable diligence, esprit and dedicated devotion to duty displayed by the members of the 70TH ENGINEER BATTALION (COMBAT) (ARMY) and the attached 511TH ENGINEER COMPANY (PB) were in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service and reflect distinct credit upon themselves and the Armed Forces of the United States.

By Order of the Secretary of the Army:

HAROLD K. JOHNSON  
*General, United States Army*  
*Chief of Staff*



GENERAL ORDERS

NO. 17

HEADQUARTERS  
DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY  
WASHINGTON, D. C., 23 April 1968

*II -- MERITORIOUS UNIT COMMENDATION.* By direction of the Secretary of the Army, under the provisions of paragraph 203, AR672-5-1, the Meritorious Unit Commendation is awarded to the following named units of the United States Army for exceptionally meritorious achievement in the performance of outstanding service during the periods indicated:

The citations read as follows:

THE 70TH ENGINEER BATTALION (COMBAT) and attached unit: 511th Engineer Company (Panel Bridge). For exceptionally meritorious achievement in the performance of outstanding service: The 70TH ENGINEER BATTALION (COMBAT) (ARMY) and attached unit distinguished themselves in support of military operations in the Republic of Vietnam from June 1966 to December 1966. The members of these units demonstrated extraordinary proficiency, dedication and perseverance in providing superb combat engineer support to the 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile). Operating under the most adverse conditions of weather and terrain, the Battalion planned and began construction on numerous varied projects for the improvement of the Division base camp. Often working around the clock, the unit personnel constructed a logistical complex, 140-bed hospital, Division headquarters complex, aircraft storage and maintenance facilities, security lights and guard towers on the base perimeter. In addition, they accomplished partial construction of a cantonment area for more than twenty-one thousand men, while simultaneously providing continuous maintenance and repair of all Division facilities. The 70TH ENGINEER BATTALION (COMBAT) (ARMY) and 511TH ENGINEER COMPANY (PANEL BRIDGE); in addition to their regular duties, conducted a comprehensive and highly valuable civic action program designed to raise the standard of living of the local civilians. Through outstanding initiative and stamina the unit members succeeded in maintaining the highest standards of construction and maintenance possible. Performing every mission in a most exemplary manner, the Battalion has significantly enhanced the vital engineer mission in the Republic of Vietnam. The remarkable dependability, fortitude and devotion to duty displayed by the members of the 70TH ENGINEER BATTALION (COMBAT) (ARMY) and the attached 511TH ENGINEER COMPANY (PANEL BRIDGE) were in keeping with the-highest traditions of the military service and reflect distinct credit upon themselves and the Armed Forces of the United States.

By Order of the Secretary of the Army:

HAROLD K. JOHNSON  
*General, United States Army*  
*Chief of Staff*

GENERAL ORDERS

NO. 42

HEADQUARTERS  
DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY  
WASHINGTON, D. C., 16 June 1969

*II -- MERITORIOUS UNIT COMMENDATION.* By direction of the Secretary of the Army, under the provisions of paragraph 203, AR 672-5-1, the Meritorious Unit Commendation is awarded to the following named units of the United States Army for exceptionally meritorious achievement in the performance of outstanding service during the periods indicated:

THE 70TH ENGINEER BATTALION (COMBAT) (ARMY) (LESS COMPANY D) and its attached units:  
444th Engineer Detachment (1 January 1967 to 10 October 1967)  
511th Engineer Company

The citation reads as follows:

The 70TH ENGINEER BATTALION (COMBAT) (ARMY) (LESS COMPANY D) and its attached units distinguished themselves in support of military operations in the Republic of Vietnam during the period 4 December 1966 to 10 October 1967. The officers and men of the battalion demonstrated extraordinary proficiency and unlimited endurance in providing superb combat engineering support to all tactical elements of the 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile). Operating under adverse conditions created by weather and terrain, the battalion aggressively pursued a massive construction program of logistical complexes, airfields and recreational facilities while continuously repairing bridges and upgrading roads along 21 miles of the main line of communication between An Khe and Pleiku. Further, the personnel of the 70TH ENGINEER BATTALION completed the first concrete runway built in a theater of operations by engineer troops using a slip-form paving machine. Realizing the importance of civic actions to the ultimate success of the war effort, the men of the battalion organized a vigorous civic action program which tremendously enhanced the living conditions of the Vietnamese people on the local level. Their untiring efforts increased civilian support for the mission of the American soldiers and other free world forces in the Republic of Vietnam. Through their unrelenting perseverance and infectious enthusiasm, they contributed immeasurably to the Allied struggle against Communist aggression in the Republic of Vietnam. The remarkable proficiency and devotion to duty displayed by the members of the 70TH ENGINEER BATTALION and its attached units are in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service and reflect distinct credit upon them and upon the Armed Forces of the United States.

By Order of the Secretary of the Army:

HAROLD K. JOHNSON  
*General, United States Army*  
*Chief of Staff*

### **Current Unit Mission**

On order, 70th Engineer Battalion deploys with or without equipment, prepares for and conducts engineer combat operations in support of national interests and objectives, and redeploys.

### **Recent Events**

### Kodiak Battalion Commanders

<u>Name</u>	<u>Dates</u>	<u>Unit</u>	<u>Location</u>
1LT John C. Pappas	23 AUG 41 - 16 JAN 42	2 / 35th EN BN	CONUS
CPT Wyman P. Boynton 0287982	SEP 43 -	2 / 35th EN BN 145th EN BN	Camp White, OR
LTC John F. McGaughey 0293099	? 44 - 6 FEB 45	145th EN BN	Camp White, OR; UK; France; Belgium; Luxembourg; Germany
MAJ Wyman P. Boynton 0287982	6 FEB 45 - ?	145th EN BN	Germany
MAJ James R. Fraser	4 SEP 45 - 9 OCT 45	145th EN BN	Germany
CPT Thomas C. O'Connell	9 OCT 45 - 13 OCT 45	145th EN BN	Germany
CPT James C. Cameron 01113625	13 OCT 45 - 30 NOV 45	145th EN BN	Germany
CPT Leroy C. Stille, Jr.	30 NOV 45 - ?	145th EN BN	Germany, Camp Patrick Henry, VA
----- <i>Inactivation Period</i> -----			
?	1 APR 49 -	70th EN BN	
----- <i>Information Break</i> -----			
LTC Raymond M. Clock	Early 51 - Mid 52	70th EN BN	Austria
LTC Al Frolich	Mid 52 - ?	70th EN BN	Austria
LTC Allen Jenson	? - ?	70th EN BN	Austria / Germany
?	? -	70th EN BN	Germany
----- <i>Information Break</i> -----			

<u>Name</u>	<u>Dates</u>	<u>Unit</u>	<u>Location</u>
LTC ? Caldwell	? - ?	70th EN BN	FT Campbell, KY
MAJ John Kopf	? - ?	70th EN BN	FT Campbell, KY
----- <i>Information Break</i> -----			
LTC Leonard Edelstein	5 DEC 64 - 17 JUL 66	70th EN BN	Vietnam
LTC John R. Redman	17 JUL 66 - 2 MAR 67	70th EN BN	Vietnam
LTC Philip D. Sellers	2 MAR 67 - 3 OCT 67	70th EN BN	Vietnam
LTC Robert E. Ayers	30 OCT 67 - 22 APR 68	70th EN BN	Vietnam
LTC Charles B. Willard	22 APR 68 - 28 SEP 68	70th EN BN	Vietnam
LTC Robert K. O'Connell	28 SEP 68 - 25 JUN 69	70th EN BN	Vietnam
LTC James E. Hays	25 JUN 69 - 31 OCT 69	70th EN BN	Vietnam
MAJ Richard E. Works	31 OCT 69 - 7 NOV 69	70th EN BN	Vietnam
LTC James McKnight	7 NOV 69 - 30 NOV 69	70th EN BN	Vietnam, FT Lewis
----- <i>Inactivation Period</i> -----			
LTC Thomas G. Luebker	93 -	70th EN BN	FT Riley

### **Alumni Accomplishments**

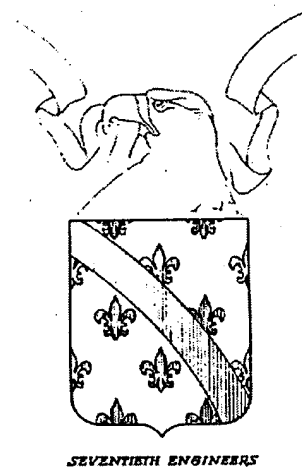
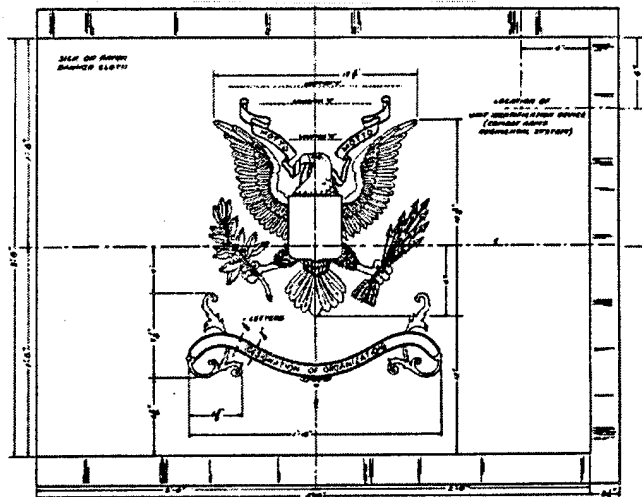
<b><u>Name</u></b>	<b><u>Unit</u></b>	<b><u>Location / Date</u></b>	<b><u>Accomplishments</u></b>
CPT Joseph K. Bratton	HSC, 70th EN BN	Austria	LTG and Chief of ENGRs
CPT Paul Y. Chinen	C CO, 70th EN BN	Vietnam	BG

## 70TH ENGINEER BATTALION UNIT PROPERTY

### Unit Colors

The original battalion colors for the 2nd Battalion, 35th Engineer Regiment, the 145th Engineer Battalion, and the 70th Engineer Battalion are unaccounted for except for the color flown by the battalion in Vietnam in 1969. That flag, damaged during an enemy rocket attack on the battalion base camp, was presented to the outgoing commander, LTC James E. Hays, when he departed the battalion on 31 OCT 69. During preparations for the reactivation of the 70th Battalion at Fort Riley in 1993, COL (Ret) Hays was located and contacted for information on his tour with the battalion. COL Hays not only proved to be a superb source of information on the unit and its activities in Vietnam, he provided the Battalion's damaged Vietnam color to use in the reactivation ceremony and donated it to the battalion. The Battalion's Vietnam battle color, currently being reconditioned for preservation by the Fort Riley Museum, will be displayed in a place of honor once again in the 70th Engineer Battalion.

The 70th Engineer Battalion organizational color is the standard Army design for regiments and separate TOE battalions, as in the official U.S. Army Institute of Heraldry drawing shown below. It is a solid scarlet color with white fringe and an embroidered American eagle displayed in the center. In its right talon the eagle holds an olive branch; in its left talon, a bundle of 13 arrows, all in proper colors. Below the eagle is a white scroll inscribed with "SEVENTIETH ENGINEER BATTALION." On the eagle's breast is embroidered the shield of the coat of arms, also shown below.



### **Unit Streamers**

The following streamers, awarded in recognition of a display of heroism and meritorious service that is the result of a group effort, and for campaign or war participation, are authorized the 70th Engineer Battalion.

### **Unit Decorations**

Presidential Unit Citation (Army), Streamer embroidered PLEIKU PROVINCE  
Meritorious Unit Commendation (Army), Streamer embroidered ALCAN HIGHWAY  
Meritorious Unit Commendation (Army), Streamer embroidered VIETNAM 1965-1966  
Meritorious Unit Commendation (Army), Streamer embroidered VIETNAM 1966  
Meritorious Unit Commendation (Army), Streamer embroidered VIETNAM 1966-1967

### **Campaign Participation Credit**

#### **World War II**

American Theater, Streamer Without Inscription  
Normandy  
Northern France  
Rhineland  
Ardennes-Alsace  
Central Europe

#### **Vietnam**

Defense  
Counteroffensive  
Counteroffensive, Phase II  
Counteroffensive, Phase III  
Tet Counteroffensive  
Counteroffensive, Phase IV  
Counteroffensive, Phase V  
Counteroffensive, Phase VI  
Tet 69 / Counteroffensive  
Summer-Fall 1969  
Winter-Spring 1970



### **Guidons**

Guidons follow the standard standard Army design for TOE companies. It is a solid scarlet color with a white engineer castle displayed in the center. The white numerals "70" above the castle represent the 70th Battalion, and the white letter below the castle indicate the company.

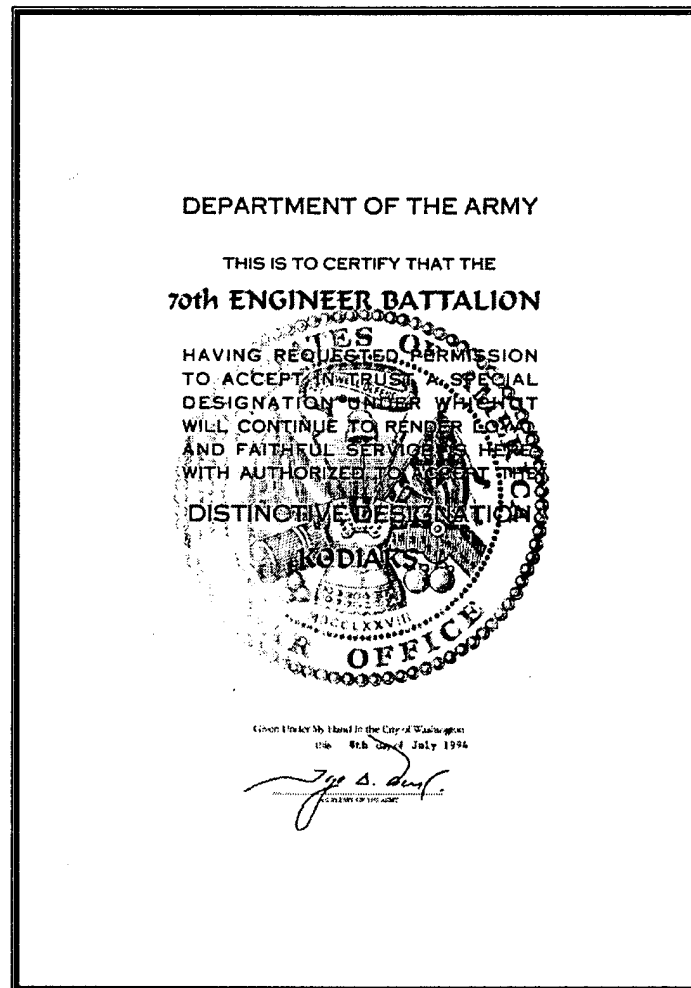
A replicate of the Company D, 70th Engineer Battalion guidon is displayed in the battalion area in recognition its soldiers and its service with the battalion.

### **Unit Crest**

The 70th Engineer Battalion has submitted a request to the U.S. Army Institute of Heraldry for the design of an official unit crest that can be added to the battalion Coat of Arms. The crest has not yet been completed.

## 70TH ENGINEER BATTALION CUSTOMS AND TRADITIONS

### Kodiak Nickname



On 29 June 1993 the Center of Military History approved "Kodiaks" as the official distinctive designation of the 70th Engineer Battalion. Although the exact origins of the nickname are not known, there is documentation of its use at Fort Campbell in 1964 and during the battalion tour in Vietnam. Presumably, the nickname refers to the Kodiak bear, the battalion service on the ALCAN Highway in World War II, and the toughness, durability, and ferocity characteristics of the bear.

Today the Kodiak is in wide-spread use throughout the battalion, often appearing on documents and for all briefings. The battalion has requested the Kodiak bear be incorporated into the design of a Unit Crest being done by the U.S. Army Institute of Heraldry.

### **The Army Song**

“THE ARMY GOES ROLLING ALONG”

FIRST TO FIGHT FOR THE RIGHT  
AND TO BUILD OUR NATIONS MIGHT  
AND THE ARMY GOES ROLLING ALONG  
PROUD OF ALL WE HAVE DONE  
FIGHTING TILL THE BATTLES WON  
AND THE ARMY GOES ROLLING ALONG  
THEN ITS HI HI HEY  
THE ARMY S ON ITS WAY  
COUNT OFF THE CADENCE LOUD AND STRONG  
FOR WHERE WE GO, YOU WILL ALWAYS KNOW  
THAT THE ARMY GOES ROLLING ALONG

### **The Division Song**

“THE BIG RED ONE”

by

COL Donald T. Kellett, Ret.  
16th Infantry Regiment

TOAST OF THE ARMY, FAVORITE SON!  
HAIL TO THE BRAVE BIG RED ONE!  
ALWAYS THE FIRST TO THIRST FOR A FIGHT,  
NO FOE SHALL CHALLENGE OUR RIGHT TO VICTORY  
WE TAKE THE FIELD, A GRAND SITE TO SEE,  
PRIDE OF THE INFANTRY!  
MEN OF A GREAT DIVISION, COURAGE IS OUR TRADITION,  
FORWARD, THE BIG RED ONE!

APPENDIX B  
HERITAGE PRESERVATION ORGANIZATIONS,  
INSTITUTIONS, AND AGENCIES

	INSTITUTION	ADDRESS	FOCUS
UNIT CERTIFICATES, STORED HISTORICAL FILES, & PROPERTY	U.S. Army Center of Military History, Organizational History Branch	ATTN: DAMH-HSO 1099 14TH Street, N.W. Washington, D.C. 20005-3402	Unit Lineage and Honors Certificate and other "Special" Certificates to include: Unit Day Certificate Special Designation (Nickname) Certificate Revolutionary War Service Certificate Historical Memorial Award Certificate  Stored Organizational History Files of inactivated or disbanded units, or of units in a combat zone or otherwise unable to care for them.  Official Unit Historical Files containing Unit Record of Service, obsolete Lineage and Honors Certificate, Official Letters of Activation, Inactivation, Redesignation, Reorganization, and various other official correspondence.
	U.S. Army Center of Military History, Museum Division	ATTN: DAMH-MD 1099 14TH Street, N.W. Washington, D.C. 20005-3402	Historical Unit / Organizational Property, to include Unit Flags and Guidons.
	U.S. Total Army Personnel Command, Military Awards Branch	ATTN: TAPC-PDA 200 Stovall Street Alexandria, VA 22332-0471	Unit Military Awards and Decoration Certificates.
RETIRED UNIT RECORDS	National Archives & Records Administration	Washington, D.C. 20408	Records of Federal Service to include Unit Operational Records prior to 1940.
	Military Reference Branch, Suitland Section	Washington, D.C. 20409	Records from World War II, Korea, and Southeast Asia since 1954.
	Information Access Section, U.S. Army Information Systems Command	Crystal Square 2, Suite 201 1725 Jefferson Davis Highway Arlington, VA 22202	Unit Operational Records since 1954, except for Southeast Asia service.
	U.S. Army Military History Institute, Archives Branch	Carlisle Barracks, PA 17013-5008	Acquired Unit Operational Records.
	U.S. Army Combined Arms Research Library	Command And General Staff College, FT Leavenworth, KS 66027	Acquired Unit Operational Records.

Illustration 22. Heritage Preservation Organizations, Institutions, and Agencies

	INSTITUTION	ADDRESS	FOCUS
UNIT HERALDRY	U.S. Army Institute of Heraldry	ATTN: TAPC-PDH Cameron Station 5010 Duke Street Alexandria, VA 22304-5050	Unit Heraldry, Distinctive Unit Insignia, and Flag design.
OFFICIAL PHOTOGRAPHS	National Archives & Records Administration, Still Pictures Branch	Washington, D.C. 20408	Unit Photographs prior to 1982.
	<i>U.S. Army Military History Institute, Special Collections Branch</i>	<i>Carlisle Barracks, PA 17013-5008</i>	<i>Acquired Unit Photographs.</i>
	Department of Defense Still Media Records Center	Building 168 Naval Station Anacostia 2701 South Capitol Street, S.W. Washington, D.C. 20374-1681	Official photo records of U.S. Armed Forces since 1982
PUBLISHED UNIT HISTORIES	U.S. Army Military History Institute, Archives Branch	Carlisle Barracks, PA 17013-5008	Published Unit Histories.
	Chief, Army National Guard Bureau		Published National Guard Unit Histories.
	<i>New York Public Library</i>	<i>5th Avenue &amp; 42nd Street New York, NY 10018</i>	<i>Published Unit Histories.</i>
OFFICIAL INTERVIEWS	U.S. Army Military History Institute, Archives Branch	Carlisle Barracks, PA 17013-5008	Oral History Program Personnel Interviews.
SUPPLEMENTAL SOURCES	<i>State Historical Societies</i>	<i>Unit Station locations.</i>	<i>Property, photographs, stories, articles.</i>
	<i>State Archives</i>	<i>Unit Station locations.</i>	<i>Property, photographs, stories, articles.</i>
	<i>Military / Local Museums</i>	<i>Unit Station locations.</i>	<i>Property, photographs, stories, articles.</i>
	<i>Military Installation / Local Newspapers</i>	<i>Unit Station locations.</i>	<i>Property, photographs, stories, articles.</i>

Illustration 23. Heritage Preservation Organizations, Institutions, and Agencies (Continued)

	<u>INSTITUTION</u>	<u>ADDRESS</u>	<u>FOCUS</u>
UNIT PERSONNEL ROSTERS	National Archives & Records Administration, Military Reference Branch	Washington, D.C. 20408	Unit Personnel Rosters and Former Commanders prior to 1917.
	National Personnel Records Center	ATTN: NCPMA-O 9700 Page Boulevard St. Louis, MO 63132-5200	Unit Personnel Rosters and Former Commanders since 1917.
	Army Reserve Personnel Center	9700 Page Boulevard St. Louis, MO 63132-5200	Army Reserve Unit Personnel Rosters and Former Commanders since 1917.
UNIT MORNING REPORTS	National Archives & Records Administration, Military Reference Branch	Washington, D.C. 20408	Unit Morning Reports prior to 1917.
	National Personnel Records Center	ATTN: NCPMA-O 9700 Page Boulevard St. Louis, MO 63132-5200	Unit Morning Reports since 1917.
INDIVIDUAL SERVICE RECORDS	National Archives & Records Administration, Military Reference Branch	Washington, D.C. 20408	Individual Military Service Records prior to 1917.
	Army Reserve Personnel Center	9700 Page Boulevard St. Louis, MO 63132-5200	Individual Military Service Records prior to 1917.
FORMER UNIT MEMBERS	Commander, Army Reserve Personnel Center	ATTN: DARP-PAS-EVS 9700 Page Boulevard St. Louis, MO 63132-5200	Service Records of former personnel.
	Commander, World Wide Locator	EREC FT Benjamin Harrison, IN 46249-5301	Service Records of former personnel.
	Community Relations Branch, Office of the Chief of Public Affairs	HQDA (SAPA-PCD-CR) Room 2E637, The Pentagon Washington, D.C. 20310-1505	Publishes annual list of Veterans Organizations and Associations.
	Association of Graduates, USMA	West Point, NY 10996	Tracks names, dates and positions, of USMA graduates in units.
	<i>Military oriented Organizations, Associations, and Publications</i>		<i>Locator Services, Notices, Bulletin Boards for contact with former personnel.</i>

Illustration 24. Heritage Preservation Organizations, Institutions, and Agencies (Continued)

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